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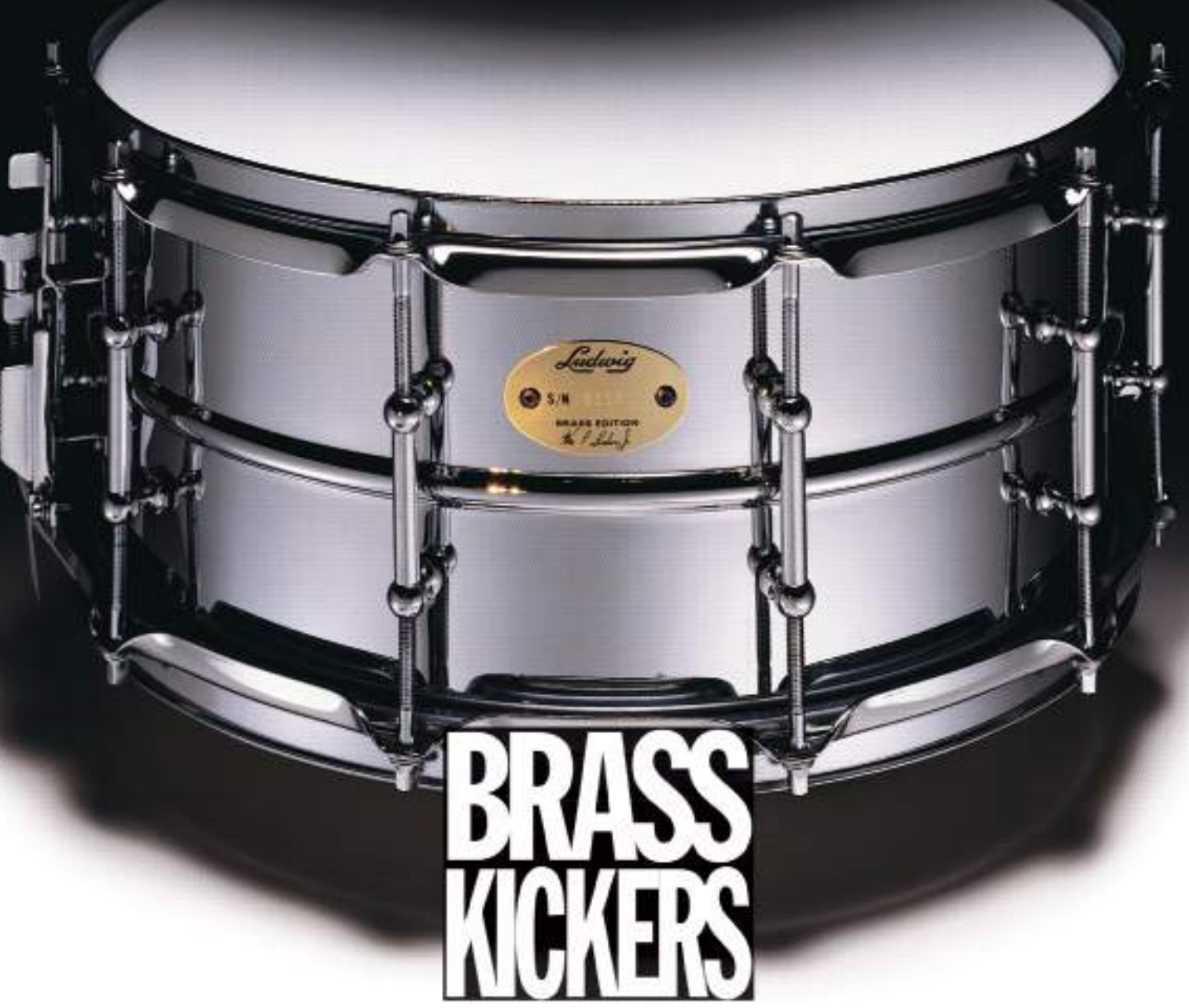

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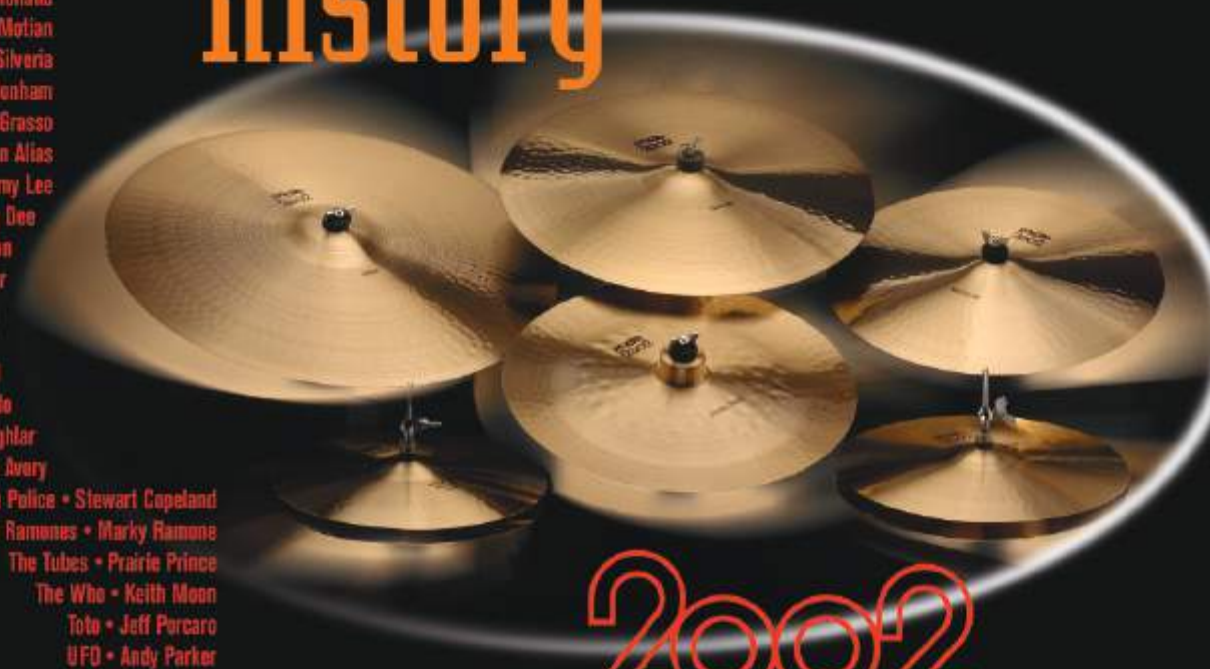

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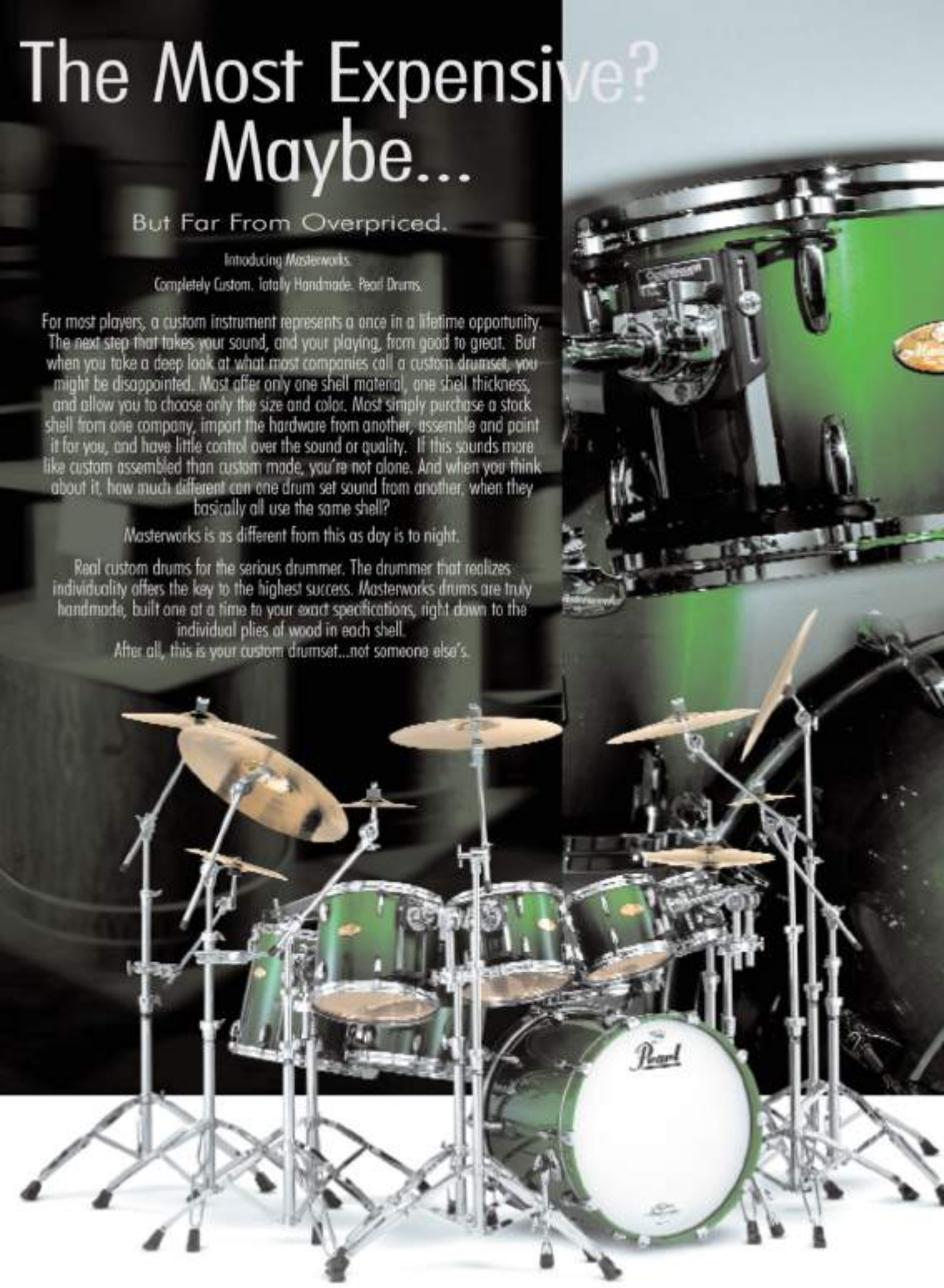

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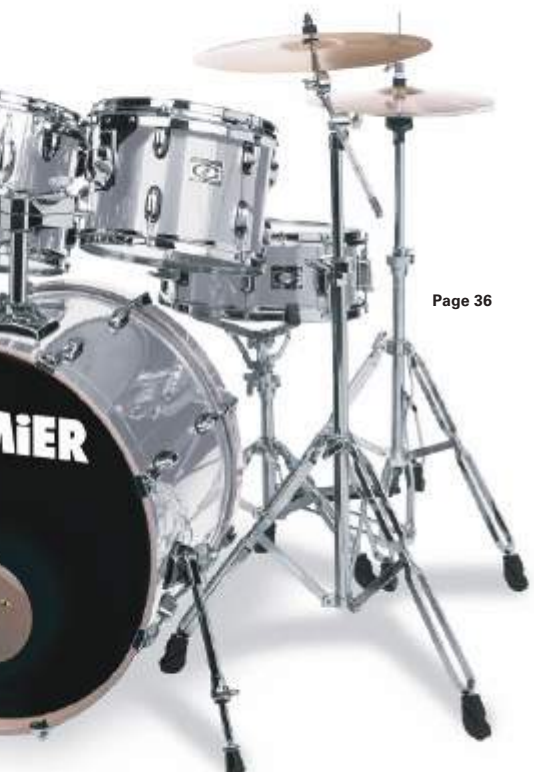

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When Bad Beats Go Good

A couple of months ago, my wife and I traveled to Bhutan, a tiny country nestled in the Himalayas. When we arrived in Paro—the only city in the country with an airport—the most holy Bhutanese festival was in full swing.

Over several days, the townspeople watched and participated in various ceremonies, many of which featured elaborately costumed dancers. The dances were accompanied by music supplied by onlooking monks, and by the dancers themselves, who held large, lollipop-shaped drums.

Now, in fifteen years at *MD*, I've seen some pretty cool-looking drums. This was something different. The drums' shells sort of balloon out, and they are held by a long, carved handle. Painted on their shells, in bright, thick colors, are dragons, an important Bhutanese symbol. The heads are struck with delicate red sticks carved into the shape of a question mark.

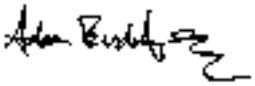
Mesmerized by the look of these things, it took me a while to realize what was being *played* on them. As if bringing to life the droning horn passages that sailed over the valley, the dancers, some of whom wore terrifying masks, moved in slow, ominous steps, tapping on their drums along to the odd melodies. Cool, I thought, this "song" is in 5/4. But how the heck are these guys accenting the melody? One person seems to be hitting the beat, but that one just struck the "&" after it. Wait a minute, now they're hitting together. What's going on here?

One of the reasons we like to travel to exotic locations is that it knocks us out of our comfort zones. When your environment shifts, you stop taking things for granted, which in turn opens you up to new ideas, interpretations, and opinions. To my "Western" musician ears, this confusing music represented something to be figured out.

In fact, the drummers were simply playing sloppily—or what your average, perfection-obsessed Western drummer would consider sloppily. I looked around, and nobody at the festival seemed to care. In fact, they were as mesmerized as I was, before my "musician's ears" intervened. Rather than detracting from the performance, the bad notes only seemed to add to the atmosphere.

Two weeks later, we were back in New Jersey, and the first music I played was The Velvet Underground's famously inaccurate (though revolutionary) first album, featuring Mo Tucker on drums. And just like over twenty years ago, when I heard it for the first time, again I was mesmerized.

An environmental shift. A new interpretation. And a revised opinion: Sometimes "bad" notes are the best possible ones to play.



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Volume 26, Number 10

The World's Most Widely Read Drum Magazine

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MODERN DRUMMER magazine (**ISSN** 0194-4533) is published monthly by **MODERN DRUMMER Publications, Inc.**, 12 Old Bridge Road, Cedar Grove, NJ 07009. PERIODICALS MAIL POSTAGE paid at Cedar Grove, NJ 07009 and at additional mailing offices. Copyright 2002 by **MODERN DRUMMER Publications, Inc.** All rights reserved. Reproduction without the permission of the publisher is prohibited.

EDITORIAL/ADVERTISING/ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICES: MODERN DRUMMER Publications, 12 Old Bridge Road, Cedar Grove, NJ 07009. Tel: (973) 239-4140. Fax: (973) 239-7139. Email: mdinfo@moderndrummer.com

MODERN DRUMMER welcomes manuscripts and photographic material, however, cannot assume responsibility for them. Such items must be accompanied by a self-addressed, stamped envelope.

SUBSCRIPTIONS: US, Canada, and Mexico $34.97 per year; $56.97, two years. Other international $41.97 per year, $79.97, two years. Single copies $4.99.

SUBSCRIPTION CORRESPONDENCE: Modern Drummer, PO Box 480, Mt. Morris, IL 61054-0480. **Change of address:** Allow at least six weeks for a change. Please provide both old and new address. Toll free tel: (800) 551-3786.

MUSIC DEALERS: Modern Drummer is available for resale at bulk rates. Direct correspondence to Modern Drummer Retail Vision, 2 Maple Street, Suite 6, Middlebury, VT 05753, (800) 381-1288.

REPRINTS: For reprints contact Heather Osborne at PARS International Corp., tel: (212) 221-9595, ext. 333, fax: (212) 221-1468, heather@parsintl.com, www.magreprints.com.

INTERNATIONAL LICENSING REPRESENTATIVE: Robert Abramson & Associates, Inc. Libby Abramson, President, 700 Post Road, Scarsdale, NY 10583, (914) 723-4700.

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to Modern Drummer, PO Box 480, Mt. Morris, IL 61054.

MEMBER: Magazine Publishers Of America, National Association Of Music Merchants, American Music Conference, Percussive Arts Society, Music Educators National Conference, Percussion Marketing Council, Music Magazine Publishers Association

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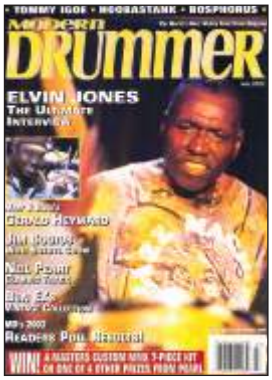

A number of years ago I sent you a letter in response to Greg Eklund of Everclear's secret to success, which was, "Hit them hard and play a paradiddle." I suggested that young drummers need to listen to drummers who have more substance to their advice. Your July interview with Elvin Jones demonstrates exactly what I am talking about.

Mr. Jones shows that there is much more depth to a good drummer than what many people see in a performance. If one wants to improve and have a lasting career, one must learn the fundamentals first. This is the unglamorous side of studying any instrument. Elvin's last statement says it all: "If you want to be serious about this instrument, be prepared to do the work." This is why he has endured throughout the years.

This interview has inspired me to continue to preach the fundamentals to my students (and to be willing to endure criticism from some), knowing that I'm providing them with the tools they'll need to grow with. Thanks to *MD*, Ken Micallef, and John Riley. And thanks especially to Elvin Jones for being such an inspiration to young players and old teachers.

Jay Webler
via Internet

Like John Riley and some of the other musicians quoted, I never thought I'd really understand Elvin's playing. He was so very different from the big band and rock drummers that were my influences as a young drummer. In fact, one particular encounter with Elvin's playing sent me for a loop—until I found the secret.

Elvin appeared in a 1971 movie called *Zachariah*. It was billed as "the first rock 'n' roll western." Elvin portrayed a gunfighter—but he also performed a solo on the drums. As I watched that solo in the theater, for the life of me I could not figure out how he could play what he was playing!

A few years later, I went to work at a film studio in Hollywood, where I met the music editor for *Zachariah*, Joe Tulley. I asked him about the Elvin Jones drum solo, and he said (rather offhandedly), "I never could get that segment synched up properly. I just did it the best I could."

Mystery solved. I wasn't crazy. I still don't understand Elvin's playing, but your article has inspired me to give it another shot! Thanks again.

Jeff Spector
San Jose, CA

The interview with Elvin Jones was a sheer pleasure to read. I can't begin to imagine how many "Repeat Bar" segments you could do with his words of wisdom.

Not only was the feature on Elvin wonderful, but you had great interviews with Gerald Heyward and Jim Bogios, a great look into Bosphorus Cymbals, and a fascinating read on vintage Ludwig drum collectibles in an interview with Bun E. Carlos. Even the reviews were spectacular. I know this will be the unsurpassed favorite in my collection for years to come. Thanks to all of the people who make *Modern Drummer* what it is: the best magazine out there!

Michael Bettiol
Vancouver, BC, Canada

2002 Readers Poll

To all *MD* Readers: I am honored to have been included as one of the Readers Poll winners this year. It is humbling to be included with such an incredible group of players and artists. Thank you, too, for all of your supportive comments and emails through WorkingDrummer.com. I haven't had much time to keep it updated, but I hope our archived articles and tips have helped you at some time in your playing.

Thank you, from the bottom of my heart, for your continued support, listening, and caring. God bless.

Paul Leim
Nashville, TN

I want to thank all of you who voted for me in the Progressive Drummer category. This is the first time I've ever made the *MD* Readers Poll, and frankly it's blowing my mind a bit. To have my name mentioned in the same breath as all the greats on those pages is just amazing to me. Thank you again, y'all!

Nick D'Virgilio
via Internet

A Little Rushed?

I want to apologize to all *MD* readers who checked out my transcription of Rush's "Time Stand Still" in the July '02 *MD*. Unfortunately, the chart had a few mistakes in it. As all my drumming friends and students know, I'm a *huge* Neil Peart fan, and this has been really bothering me. So I corrected the chart, and *MD* has been gracious enough to post the corrected version at www.moderndrummer.com. It's in the "Lessons" section of the site.

Please go have a look. In the meantime, I can just hear all you guys yelling at me: "Joe, you're supposed to check this stuff *before* they print it." Sorry.

Joe Bergamini
Whippany, NJ

Be A Chameleon

I think that every drummer on the planet Earth, regardless of playing level or skill, should read and take to heart Tommy Igoe's "Be A Chameleon" article in July's *Modern Drummer*. I'm a fan of Tommy's work, and even more of his attitude. Thank you for the article and the insight.

Eric Patterson
via Internet

Bun E.'s Collection

Your article on Bun E. Carlos's drum collection was very enlightening. This guy truly loves not only his craft, but also its history and everything having to do with it (especially Ludwig drums—time-tested and drummer approved).

A five-year hiatus from drumming is now behind me. It's really nice to get back and to see that *MD* hasn't missed a beat (no pun intended). Keep it up!

Dean Wendland
via Internet

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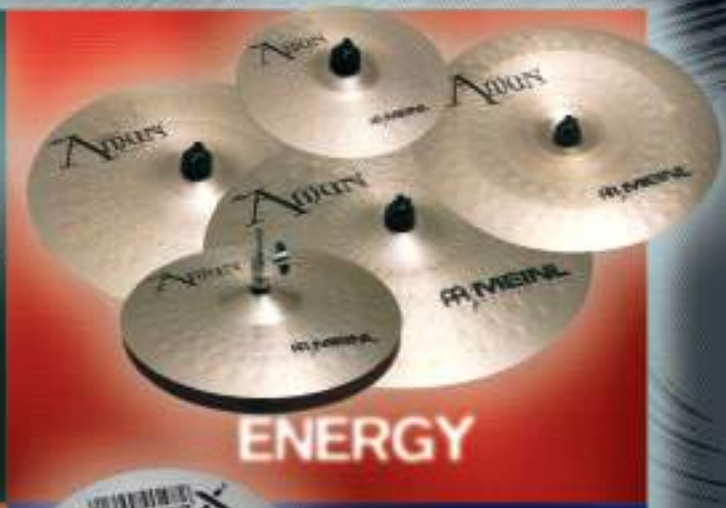

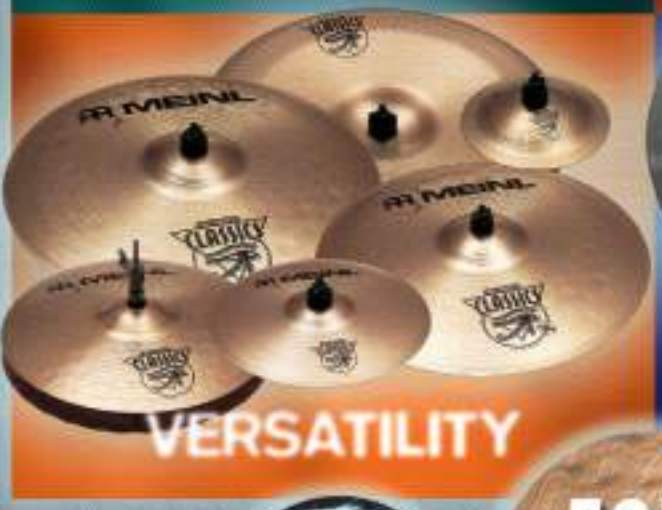

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MD Festival Weekend

It was truly a pleasure and an honor to be able to participate in this year's *Modern Drummer* Festival. I want to thank everyone involved for doing such an amazing job. Everyone's professionalism really made it a breeze to perform. It's now obvious to me why you've had fifteen successful Festivals in a row. *Great* job.

Billy Ashbaugh
via Internet

Wow, what a weekend! It was an honor to be included in what has become the most anticipated annual event in the drumming community. It's hard to describe the camaraderie that takes place backstage, but I feel like I have nine new best friends now. Billy Ashbaugh, John Blackwell, Robbie Ameen...heck, *everyone* was so supportive of each other that it was like we were old grammar-school buddies.

And the crowd? What a great group of people! You give something to them and they give it back ten times in return. And to have my dad [Sonny Igoe] receive an *MD* Editors Achievement Award right after I played was a special moment for us and for our entire family.

Once again, thanks for including me in a great weekend of music.

Tommy Igoe
Teaneck, NJ

Thank you for the fantastic event! I really enjoyed the weekend. Unfortunately, I had to leave in a hurry, so I didn't have time to thank the *Modern Drummer* staff for the privilege of being invited to play and for the help and support at the show. So thanks again.

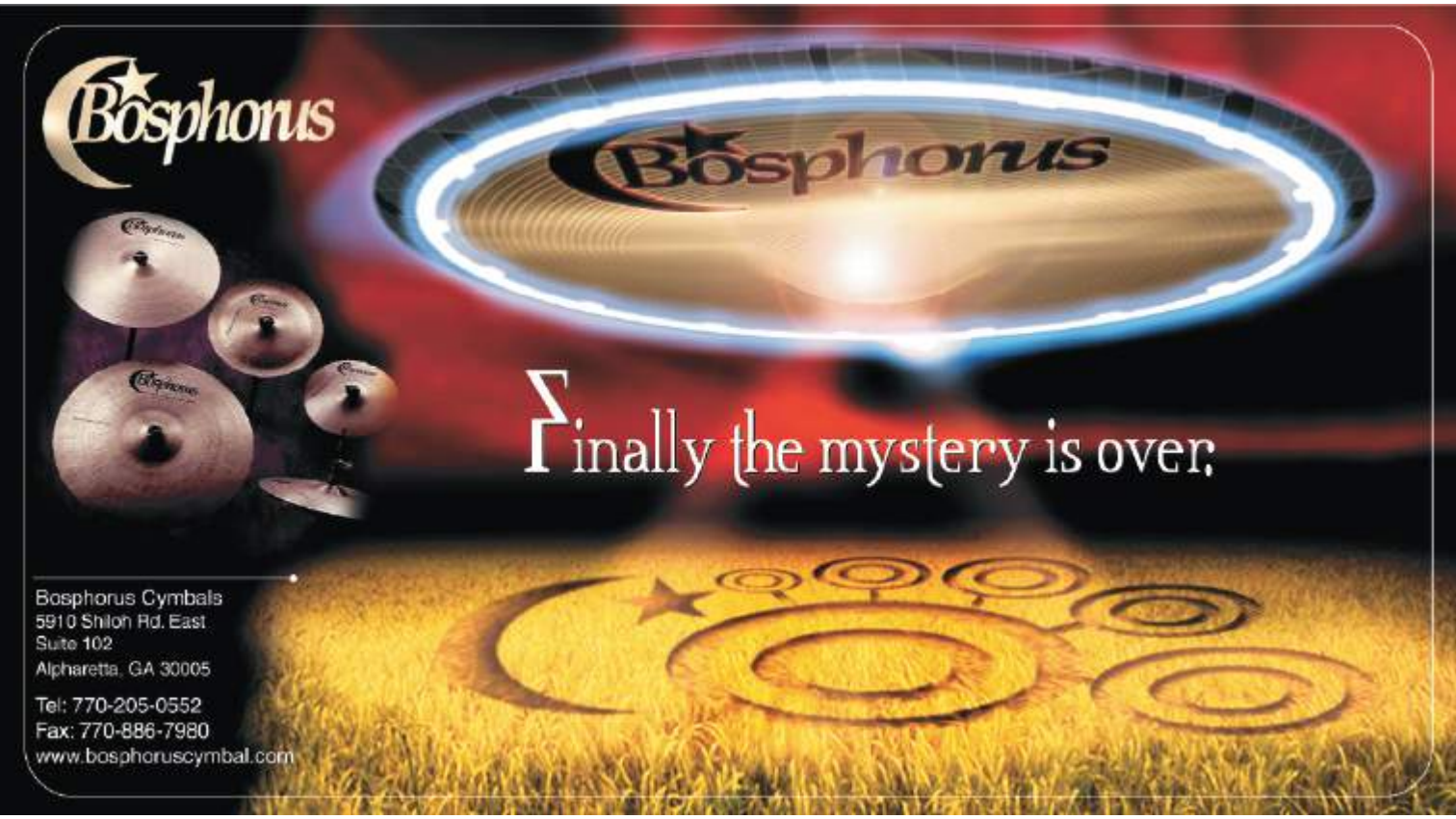
Thomas Lang
from England, via Internet

Thanks for turning the fifteenth edition of the *MD* Festival into such a great event, and for making us part of it. Being there was a great experience. We offer our most heartfelt thanks to the whole staff.

Furio Chirico & Sergio Ponti
from Italy, via Internet

I'd like to congratulate the *Modern Drummer* staff on a very successful Festival. We know how much time and effort it takes to put on a show like that. It's especially challenging to pull it off on top of your normal gig. It was truly a first-class act, and I think the audience and all of the performers had a blast.

Jerry A. Andreas
Drum Marketing Manager
Yamaha Corporation of America



Please pass our best wishes to all involved with this year's Festival Weekend. It's a great industry event that benefits consumers, artists, and the companies involved. Kudos to all from the crew at D'Addario/Evans.

John Roderick
Director of Marketing
J. D'Addario & Co.

I've been going to the *MD Festival* for years. I cancel all playing jobs for that special weekend. Nowhere else can you see and hear so many of the world's greatest drummers in one place.

All the artists were super, but when Thomas Lang finished playing, everyone turned to each other and said, "What planet is *he* from?" I've never seen that kind of command of the drumset.

Thanks for bringing together such a special group of people who love drums and the beautiful sounds that emanate from them.

Rick Lawton
via Internet

This year's Festival was way beyond description. The lineup of artists—and their performances—was incredible. The *MD* staff, the techs, the sponsors, and all others involved are to be commended. The entire audience should have saved an ovation for all of you.

Now the problem becomes, What can you guys possibly do next year to top this year?

Michael Black
via Internet

Photographing The Photographer

Every year we see Alex Solca taking photos at the Festival. He's come to be a part of the *Modern Drummer* family, and his photos are an integral part of your annual coverage of the event.

I'm not a photographer, but I got some good shots of Alex this year. I'm sending them to you in hopes that one of them will end up in the magazine in tribute to his hard work.

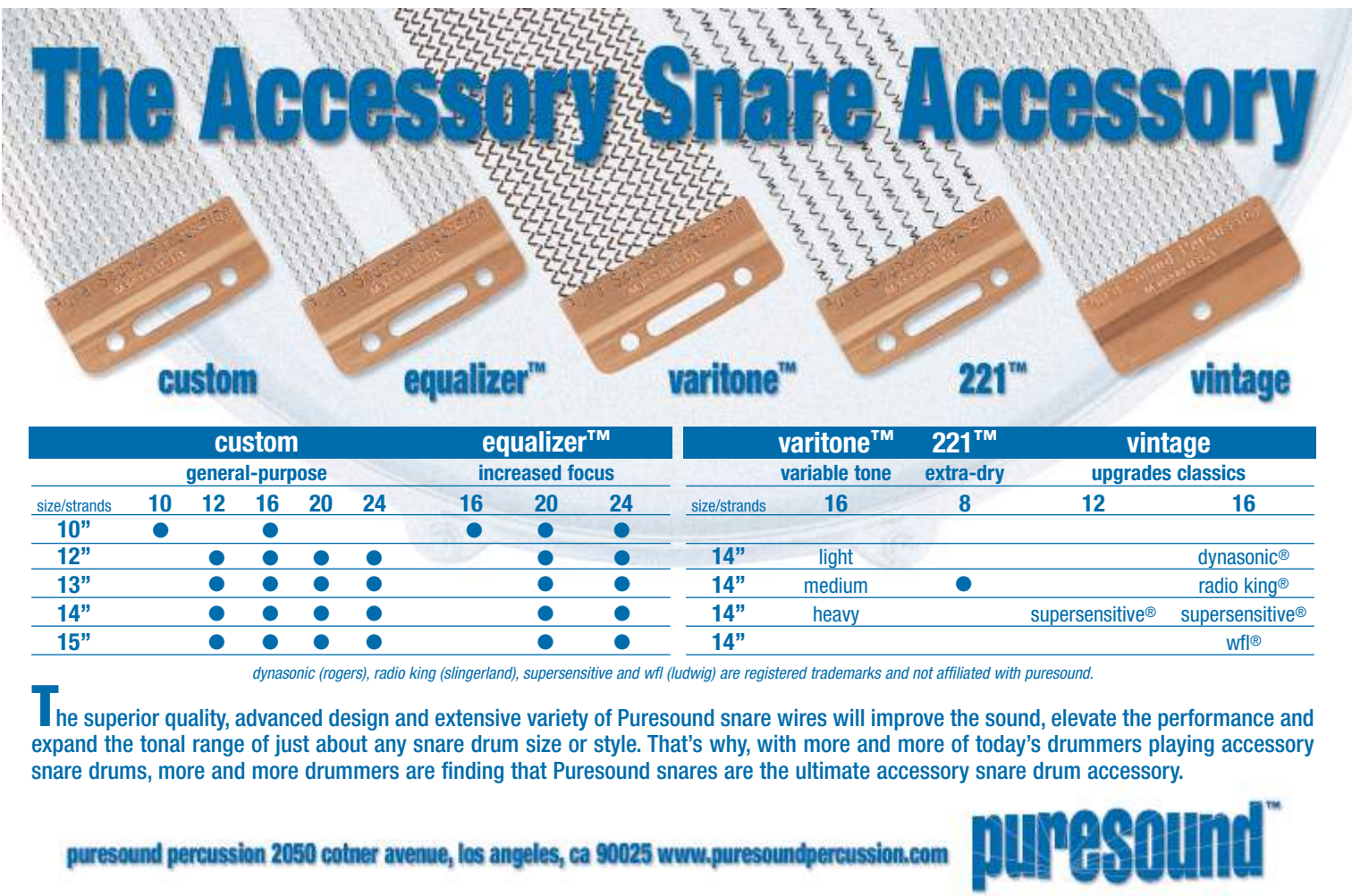
Kathy Breton
Shelton, CT

Editor's note: Thanks, Kathy. We're happy to oblige.

MD Drum Festival photographer Alex Solca

How To Reach Us

Correspondence to *MD*'s *Readers' Platform* may be sent by mail: 12 Old Bridge Road, Cedar Grove, NJ 07009, fax: (973) 239-7139, or email: rvh@moderndrummer.com.



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Tool's Danny Carey On Drumkit Sounds

Q *MD*'s 2002 Product Extravaganza in the June 2002 issue said that you had a new drumset that featured Paiste Custom Cast drums made by Jeff Ocheltree. I'm a very big fan of Tool and especially of your drumming, and I'm curious about these new drums. I'm sure they're great, otherwise you wouldn't have switched to them. But I wonder how their sound compares to wood drums. Do you use any triggers, or just the natural sound?

Also, do you have any plans for making an instructional video in the future? I know I'm not the only drummer who's trying to learn the drum parts to Tool's songs—especially the more complex rhythms and beats in *Lateralus*. The music of Tool and your drumming are a big influence to my band and me. A little help couldn't hurt.

Nestor Belmares
via Internet

Kevin Willis

A To begin with, I have definitely *not* switched from Sonor to another drum company. I've merely added another wonderful weapon to my arsenal.

The Ocheltree/Paiste kit is a whole other beast that functions in a different way from conventional wooden drums. Because of the material the shells are made from ($^3/_{16}$" bronze), it has a much more extreme transient attack. And because of its weight, it has a more pronounced fundamental frequency. This allows for a cutting sound that's ideal for many loud and aggressive situations. There is a sacrifice of some of the warm overtones that are produced by a wooden shell, which I miss when playing on more melodic or mellow pieces. But you could never have both in the same drums. I enjoy going back and forth between my Sonor bubinga drums and my Ocheltree/Paiste bronze kit. It keeps things fresh and interesting for me.

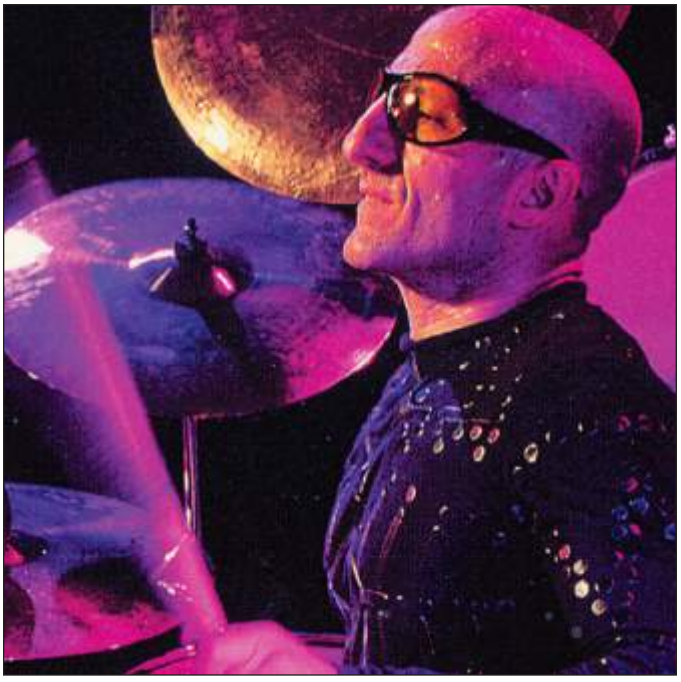
I've never triggered samples from my drums. I've always been happy with the pure sound of a finely tuned drum, so I leave the sample triggering to pads placed around my acoustic setup. This seems like a much better way to use electronics. I never thought samples did a very good job at imitating a drumset, so I only use them as augmentation to my acoustic kit.

Time permitting, I would like to do a drum video and a book before the end of the year. However, before I can commit to those projects, I will first have to know when Tool is done with the touring cycle for *Lateralus* and what the touring plans are for The Pigmy Love Circus and Zaum [Tool side projects]. Thanks for your interest.

Kenny Aronoff's Dragontown Drum

Q Your drumming and musicianship on Alice Cooper's *Dragontown* is outstanding. Was the snare used on "Sister Sarah" your signature snare drum? And did you use one snare drum throughout the recording, or different drums depending on the song?

Jim
Pembroke Pines, FL



A Thanks for the compliment. The snare drum I used on Alice Cooper's *Dragontown* was a $6^1/_2$x14 solid metal snare called "The Pipe" made by custom drum builder Joe Montineri. It had a Remo coated Emperor head on it, with no muffling.

I generally do use different snare drums on an album. I'll come to a session with up to thirty snare drums, because I love to have many choices. But on that particular project, the producer wanted me to use the same snare drum on the entire album.

My favorite and most often-used snare drum is my own signature 5x14 brass snare drum called the Trackmaster, made by Tama. It sounds like an old 1960s brass snare. It has lots of crack and warmth all in one drum. Thanks for your question, and best of luck to you.

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Self-Improvement Tips From Dave Holland's Billy Kilson

Q I'm a twenty-five-year-old who's been playing drums on and off for about ten years. I've been playing for a church throughout that time. I got serious only two years ago, and in the meantime I've let a couple of opportunities pass me by.

In your February 2002 *MD* interview you said that you had come to drumming at a fairly late age. Yet you're a great drummer. What would you advise me to do at my age to improve my chops—and my career potential?

Marvin Short
Forest Park, IL

A To begin with, Marvin, it's *never* too late. Once you recognize the need to improve your skills, that's virtually "day one." The time that has elapsed isn't the most important. It's the time you put into improving your skills that matters.

Arguably, there are thirteen essential rudiments. A local music store or drum instructor should be able to assist you with rudimental guidance. It wasn't until the age of twenty that I was exposed to the rudiments (by my teacher, Alan Dawson). Since then I have continued to practice Alan's rudimental concepts daily. I've found this to be a tremendous asset.

There's no doubt that the church is one of the best places to begin a career in music. But try to play some gigs outside that realm. Taking chances is always hard. Continually seeking out support and guidance is also difficult—but most rewarding. You've already made the first step. As my mother used to say, "Consider yourself a bit ahead of the pack, and stay focused." With your attitude, there's a bright horizon waiting. Good luck!

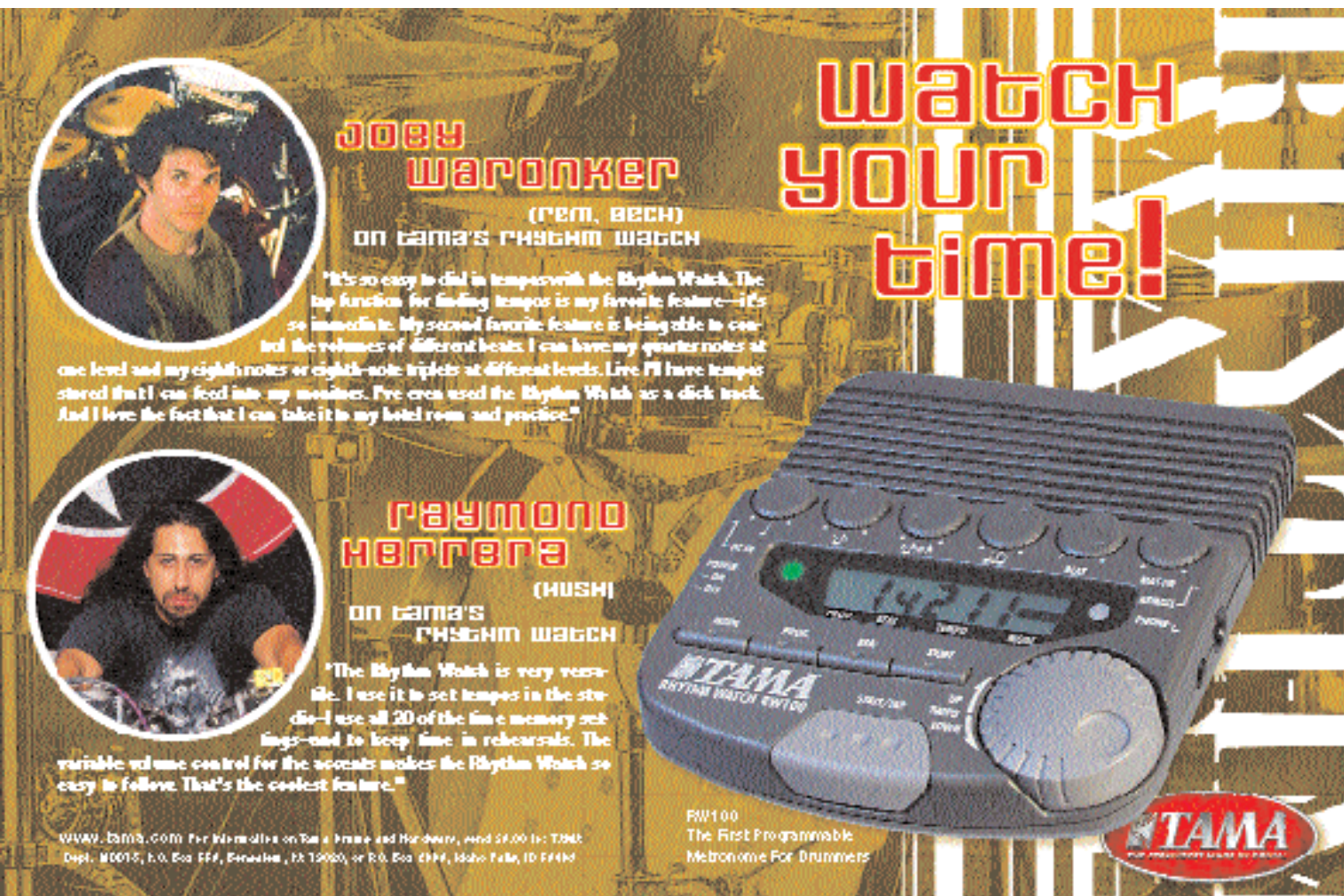
Repeat Bar
A Classic Quote From MD's Past

"People were saying you should either be a jazz drummer or a rock drummer. I grew up believing that it all came from the same place. If I like The Police, why can't I love Miles?"

Rodney Holmes (Santana, Brecker Brothers, Joe Zawinul), November 1999

Would you like to ask your favorite drummer a question?

Send it to Ask A Pro, Modern Drummer, 12 Old Bridge Rd., Cedar Grove, NJ 07009. Or you may email rvh@moderndrummer.com. We will do our best to pursue every inquiry.



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Buddy's Foot

Q I have a question pertaining to Buddy Rich's playing on his legendary *Mercy Mercy* album, which was recorded live at Caesar's Palace in 1968 (Pacific Jazz, CDP 7243 8 54331 2 2).

At the 11 minute, 20 second mark of track #3—the monumental "Channel One Suite"—Buddy begins an incredible display of press rolls accented with rimshots and bass-drum "bombs." Precisely thirty-seven seconds later, Buddy's right foot goes into overdrive. He executes a flurry of unbelievable single beats on the bass drum for a total of ten seconds, non-stop. Did he really accomplish this amazing feat with just one bass drum, one pedal, and one foot?

Ralph E. Black
Tioga, PA

A Yes, he did. Buddy is perhaps best known for his amazing hand speed and sticking technique. However, his background as a tap dancer, combined with his innate, almost superhuman talent, also gave him an incredibly fast and powerful bass-drum foot.

Zanki Cymbals

Q About ten years ago I purchased a used 20" cymbal for $30. The words "Zanki," "Viera," "Artigian Products," and "Product of Italy" are stamped on the cymbal, a black "Zanki" logo is on the top side, and the word "medio" is slightly visible on the bottom. It has a small bell about 4" in diameter, is medium to heavy in terms of thickness, and is hammered.

I first used the cymbal as a crash, but later found it works great as a ride when used in low-volume situations and played with thinner sticks. I haven't had much luck finding any info about Zanki cymbals. I'm hoping you can give me some history on my cymbal and its manufacturer.

Tim Gessner
via Internet

A Sabian president Robert Zildjian is an authority on cymbal history. He provided the following information.

"Zanki cymbals were made by the Zanchi family in Pistoia, Italy. You'll also see cymbals with the Zanchi name, which is just a differently spelled trademark.

"After World War II, four Italian cymbalmaking familes—the Tronchi, Biasi, Busani, and Zanchi families—combined to form the UFIP Company in Pistoia. Since they all used the same process—called roto-casting—it wasn't too difficult a merger. But the merger didn't last too long. The Zanchis broke away and started their own company, producing fine cymbals under their own name. As far as I know, the family still makes cymbals in Pistoia. They sell to a small clientele, mostly in Europe."

Monster Bass Drums

Q I have two 28" bass drums that I've connected together to make one drum. I connected them by putting a rim between them and tightening the claw hooks from each drum on either side of that rim. I used weather stripping between the drumshells, as well as between the shells and the rim. I saw Alex Van Halen's drums made in a similar fashion, and they looked and sounded great.

The problem is, I have to keep tightening the claw hooks. I'm wondering if there is a more permanent way of connecting the two drums. Any info you could give me would be helpful.

Don Eckard
via Internet

A One way to permanently connect the two shells would be to bolt thin connecting boards between them (inside the shells), and then glue the rim in place on the outside between the shells. You'd probably want to continue to use the claw hooks for reinforcement.

However, we question the practicality of this idea. Once you created a single bass drum that was 28x28 in size, what would you pack it in? How would you carry it, or get it through doorways? Alex Van Halen used his monster drums on a major rock tour, with huge rolling cases, tractor-trailers to carry them in, and an army of roadies to handle them. Unless you enjoy a similar situation, it seems to us more logical to retain the twin shells, and just deal with the minor inconvenience of working with the claw hooks.

Improving Stick Control

Q When I'm practicing my single strokes, as I play them faster I lose control of my sticks. I can't keep them going straight up and down. What can I do to correct this problem ?

Doug Washington
via Internet

A Try altering your practicing routine slightly, in the following manner: Take your single strokes up to the speed at which you begin to lose control, then back off slightly. Continue to play the single strokes at the fastest speed at which you *can* maintain control. Work at that speed for a while, focusing on maintaining the evenness of your strokes as well as the speed.

Once you feel very comfortable at that speed, *then* try moving up a few clicks on your metronome. Build up your practice speed gradually, using this technique. The idea is to reinforce your abilities at each new speed level, rather than trying to accelerate all at once.

Preventing Sweaty Hands

Q Is there *anything* that will keep my hands dry and stop stick slippage? I've tried sanded sticks, tape, and Gorilla Snot, all to no avail. I don't like gloves. Can you offer any alternative ideas?

Charles Woods
via Internet

A If the methods you've listed have all failed you, you may need to address the perspiration on your hands themselves, rather than treating the sticks.

Try using an anti-perspirant product directly on your hands. The push-up dry "stick-type" products (like Gillette Right Guard or Mennen Speed Stick) are the most portable and convenient to use. Keep in mind that it must be an anti-perspirant, not just a deodorant stick. The idea is to actually reduce the amount of perspiration generated by your hands. We also suggest wearing athletic-style wristbands, to prevent perspiration from running onto your hands from your arms.

These methods may need to be used in combination with some of the on-drumstick methods in order to achieve your goal.

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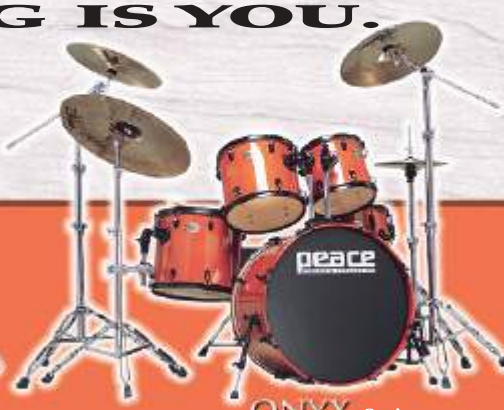

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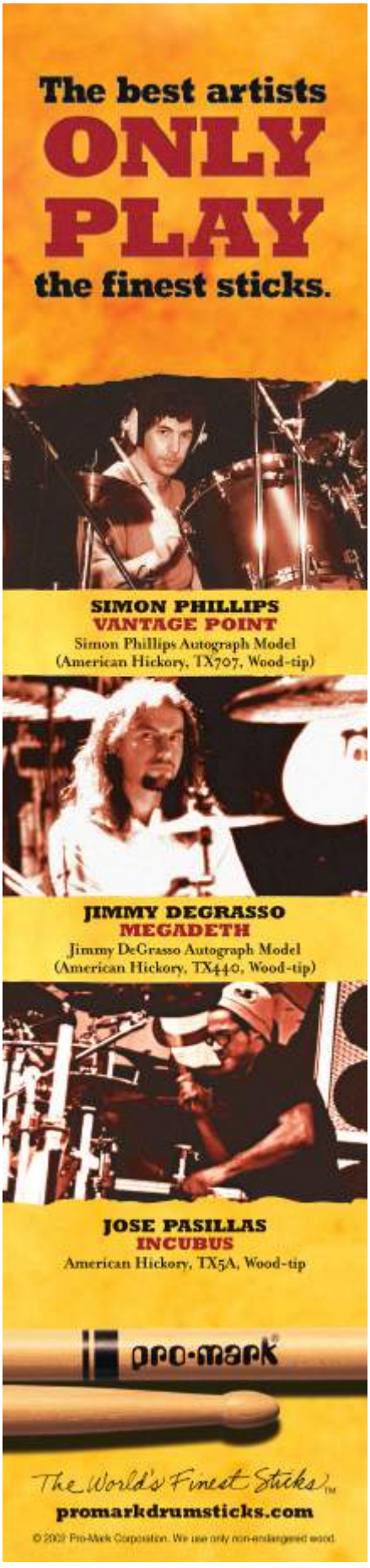

Recreating Bonham's Kit

Q Back in the January 1996 issue, *MD* ran a sweepstakes for a John Bonham replica drumkit in natural maple finish. It was custom-built for that giveaway. I'm trying to re-create this kit, and I'm hoping you can help me with the specifications.

I'm cool with the toms and bass drum. Do you know what today's equivalent is to Bonham's Supra-Phonic 400 snare drum? I checked Ludwig's site and the closest match I found is their Chrome Metal snare. Also, do the current Ludwig 26" bass drums allow for tom and ride-cymbal mounting right on the drum? Does Ludwig still carry the accessory arms and stands? If so, can you give me the part numbers?

I'm trying to create this kit as a present to my brother, a lifelong Bonham fan. He lost his job recently, and I'm hoping this will get him going in the right direction. Any help you can give me is very much appreciated.

Bryan Castle
Canton, MA

A Ludwig marketing manager Jim Catalano replies: "Thank you for your inquiry. The Zep set made by Ludwig for the *MD* Bonham Giveaway was the following sizes: 14x26 bass drum, 10x14 'rack' tom, 16x16 and 16x18 floor toms, and a 6½x14 metal snare.

"Bonzo's 'rack' tom was actually mounted on a snare stand, rather than on the bass drum. It *is* possible to mount a tom to a modern 26" bass drum, using our P1610D mounting plate and LR255STH single tom holder with L-arm attachment. However, that will put the tom in a very high position that may be uncomfortable for playing.

"The ride cymbal can be attached to the bass drum with our L1372 shell mount cymbal arm. For stability in heavy playing, I recommend the use of two P1216D brackets to hold the cymbal arm.

"The snare drum used by John Bonham was the standard 6½x14 Supra-Phonic model. It featured a chrome-plated metal shell, a P85 Strainer, and standard hoops. (Remember that Bonzo used many different sets in his career, including Amber Vista-Lites, Stainless Steels, and a variety of sparkles.) The snare we offer today that most closely resembles Bonham's snare is the LM402.

"For further details about John Bonham, I suggest you check out *John Bonham, A Thunder Of Drums*, by Chris Welch and Geoff Nichols. It's available in most bookstores or online book services."

Slingerland Zoomatic Strainer

Q I have a Slingerland Sound King snare drum that my grandfather gave me about thirty years ago. I like to use it for its sentimental value, and also because it's a good-sounding drum.

Lately I've noticed that as I play the drum, the knob on the Zoomatic strainer gradually begins to turn and loosen. Has anyone come up with a good way (other than duct tape) to keep this from happening?

Billy Dinardo
Tucson, AZ

A *MD* drum historian Harry Cangany responds, "Slingerland's metal work always left a lot to be desired. This includes the handles of the Clamshell strainer, the threading of the bass-drum spur brackets, and the Zoomatic strainer that you have.

"Keeping the tension adjustment from backing off may be a tricky job. You can't use a product like Loctite, since the threaded bolt needs to move in order to tension the snare wires. Check the receiving unit on the shell first to see how its threads are. That really may be the culprit and not the knob itself. If that's the case, you might be able to have the receiving unit rethreaded. Of course, besides not being very durable, the Zoomatic strainer is reverse-threaded, making it all the more difficult to repair. Failing that option, your best hope is to find a replacement knob."

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Alicia Keys'

Paul John Jr.

A Minor Grooves

It's hard to imagine that any *more* soul could be infused into Alicia Keys' music. But on the hugely popular hit "Fallin'"—and the rest of her highly regarded set list—twenty-three-year-old (and for the most part self-taught) touring drummer Paul John Jr. does just that, bringing a heavy R&B and Gospel feel to the mix. "I started in church," recalls John. "Gospel was my foundation. As far back as I can remember, I *always* wanted to play drums."

Paul says that one of his main influences was Nathaniel Townsley (Mariah Carey, Corey Glover). "At that time," he says, "Nathaniel was playing on a lot of Gospel records. I also studied with Gordon Campbell, who is out on tour with Brandy, and who happens to be my cousin. Mostly, though, I just played along to my favorite records, like The Yellowjackets, Mint Condition, and any recordings with Gospel drummer Jeff Davis."

Live, you'll hear John take Alicia's well-crafted songs from her debut CD, *Songs In A Minor*, and bring them up to a whole new level. "The gig is beautiful," he says. "I thank God every day, no cliché. Every gig is special.

"You need to come to a show to really appreciate who Alicia Keys is," John continues. "What I like about her is that she plays, she sings, she dances—she gives her all. She's a true musician. She's always trying to become better, and that keeps *me* up. It's great being a part of her camp."

In his time off from touring, John gets back to his roots leading his own Gospel group, LIV, which is short for Leon's Inner Voice. "When I'm home in Jamaica, Queens, *that's* my gig," he insists. "I like to experiment. I don't see myself as playing only one style."

Billy Amendola

ADRIAN PASSARELLI

Nelly Furtado's Canadian Clubber

Canada's Adrian Passarelli has been with Nelly Furtado since she initially put a live band together two years ago in Toronto. Since this was prior to the release of her acclaimed *Whoa, Nelly!* album, auditioning drummers were coming in completely cold. "Drummers would go in and play the tune once, they'd rewind the tape, and the next person would play," Passarelli explains.

"There's really no way to prepare for an audition like that," Adrian insists. "I didn't even have an idea of what style of music it was. But I was listening to the tunes through the door while the other drummers auditioned, and I thought, Wow, this is exactly what I want to do."

Passarelli says the gig requires a versatile drummer. "The album is diverse," he says, "ranging from hard-hitting rock, to reggae-influenced tracks—even bossa nova. It's also important to pay attention during the show, because there are a lot of loopy things and quirky sounds that pop up. Everything is played live, so there are no tapes running at any point. Nelly's a pretty spontaneous artist. If she feels like going off and extending a tune for a bit, she'll go ahead and do that. So you always have to be up for going with the flow."

Passarelli says that Furtado's DJ Lil' Jaz acts much like a percussionist. "He has great rhythm and musicality," the drummer says. "He'll throw things in at just the right time. He adds a lot of flavor to the music."

Sometimes Lil' Jaz might play a beat straight off of a record, so having an understanding of playing to loops is quite necessary for Passarelli. "You have to understand the nature of the turntables," the drummer says. "It's my job to go in a straight line, to not sway at all. Sometimes he'll embellish a lot of the grooves I'm playing, and he'll sway the groove the way he wants to."

Adrian says he enjoys all of Furtado's music, but particularly enjoys playing "Baby Girl," the show opener. "It's a pretty challenging tune for me to play," he admits. "I trigger a lot of samples, and I have to really focus while keeping the groove. Another tune, 'Trynna Finda Way,' is a heavy groove tune, and I get a little fancy with the hi-hat on that one. I still enjoy playing all of it, though. It's all very exciting to me."

Robyn Flans

LYNN COULTER

NATIVE AMERICAN HEART

Lynn Coulter has been very busy for the past three years. After working with Rita Coolidge on the singer's pop music, he got involved with her side project, Walela, which gained some attention from their involvement in Robbie Robertson's album *Music For The Native Americans*. According to Coulter, each project requires a different approach.

"Walela is quite a challenge," he explains, "because it's Native American pop music. I spent time with the records to learn what percussionist Geoffrey Gordon had done. It's all hand drumming, so I took the approach of not using a conventional drumset. I put together a setup that I thought would work, and I play with mallets and deerskin gloves. I've taken the gloves and cut off certain sections, stuffing them with cotton for some songs so I can get the sound I want but not hurt myself while doing it. I'm using all kinds of shakers, and I have bells on my ankles too. I also have three kick drums in various positions."

The approach to Coolidge's regular pop performances is somewhat acoustic. She needs a drummer who can play percussion and sing backup, which Coulter has always done. "My setup is a half-percussion/half-drum hybrid. I've got congas and bongos to my left and all kinds of toys to my right, hanging from cymbal stands and such.

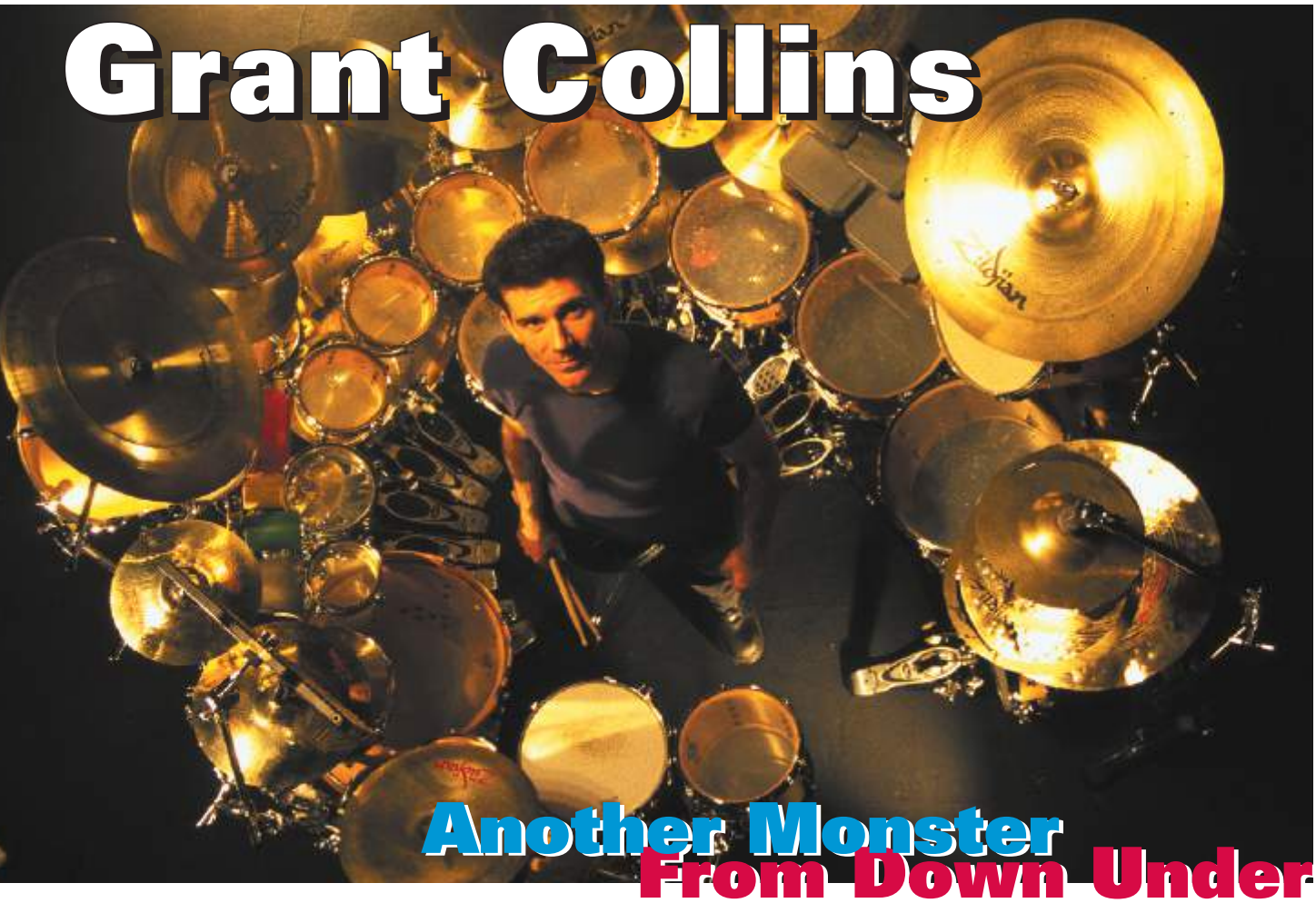
"Both situations are very creative," Coulter continues. "It's been cool just putting together the sets. I even use an old Samsonite suitcase with a microphone placed inside of it as a kick drum, which always gets a lot of comments from sound guys. When we get sounds, though, they're blown away. You have to hear it to believe it."

Lynn also hooked up with the touring production of *Smokey Joe's Café* through his connection with Coolidge, who was brought in as the featured guest artist and in turn asked her band to do the show. Coulter says he enjoys the Lieber/Stoller stage revue immensely. "It's everything from Broadway to 'Hound Dog,' 'Kansas City,' 'Stand By Me,' 'There Goes My Baby,' and all those classic '50s and '60s R&B songs. It's a very fast-paced show—two hours of nonstop music—and it's great fun."

When Coulter's in town (Los Angeles), he's involved in what he describes as a "co-op" project called Mason South, in which several songwriters work—collectively and individually—at writing and performing material.

Robyn Flans

Grant Collins



Another Monster From Down Under

As the saying goes, it's not what you've got, but what you do with it that counts. Australian drummer Grant Collins is proof. Many drummers have a big kit like his. But not many players can keep audiences amazed with their drum compositions for two hours straight. And Collins performs at clinics and solo concerts without the benefit of backing tracks.

"It all started when I saw a video of Alex Acuña playing timbales and noticed him playing left-foot clave on a woodblock," Collins recalls. "Then he played kit, soloing over a clave pattern that he played on the hi-hats. I thought, That's what /want to do."

Further inspiration struck from a less conventional source. "I saw Australian pianist Michael Keiran Harvey play an ostinato with his left hand while soloing with his right," Collins says. "I knew I had to try that on the drums."

Experiments with the hands ended up at his feet. Soon the drummer was playing complex independent rhythms with all four limbs, switching between pedals while soloing over them with his hands.

A conversation at the 1998 Ultimate Drummers Day in Melbourne inspired Grant to take his playing to yet *another* level. "Dom Famularo saw what I did and really dug it," Grant says proudly. "He said, 'Man, you've got so many great ideas. What you should do is think in terms of verses and choruses, and write a song about something.' So I took that idea and began composing all these drum songs."

Now Grant floors audiences with his intense and complex compositions. To perform these compositions, he employs twenty-five Pearl drums, twenty-eight Zildjian cymbals, and fourteen pedals connected to five bass drums, woodblocks, a cowbell, tambourines, a snare drum, bells, and an oriental crash. And Collins says this setup is likely to get *bigger*. "I'm writing ideas at the moment for which I've had to order two cable hats, another foot snare, and hand percussion."

Collins' two CDs, *Primal Instinct* (1999) and *Dogboy* (2001), contain no overdubs. What sounds like three or four players is only him. But it's not until you see Grant play live that you really comprehend what he does. For those who can't wait for the drummer to come to their town, though, live footage can be seen at the his Web site, www.grantcollins.com.

Mark Gladman

NEWS

Matt Chamberlain just completed a new record with Tori Amos that will be out shortly, at which time he will be touring with her. Matt can also be heard on upcoming recordings by David Bowie, jazz pianist Brad Mehldau, Lifehouse, OKGO, Liz Phair, Van Hunt, Pay The Girl, Faith Hill, and Sara Evans.

Rick Malkin

Paul Leim is on recent CDs by Kenny Chesney, LoneStar, Kellie Coffey, Jewel, Tommy Shane Steiner, Chely Wright, Daryl Singletary, Tammy Cochran, and Bob Seger. Recent performances include Nashville's Salute To ZZ Top (TNN), New Faces (TNN), and The London Symphony's Hollywood Movie Themes performance.

Tommy Stewart is no longer in Godsmack. According to the band's publicist, Tommy has left the band to pursue other musical opportunities.

Brian Blade is on Wayne Shorter's *Footprints Live*, as well as *Directions In Music: Celebrating Miles Davis And John Coltrane*, which also features Herbie Hancock, Michael Brecker, Roy Hargrove, and John Patitucci.

Steve Gadd and **Manu Katché**'s drum loops are on Zawose & Brook's *Assembly*.

Ryan Pope is on The Get Up Kids' *On A Wire*.

Christopher Emery is on tour with American Head Charge.

Pete Escovedo and **Hector Munoz** are on Alejandro Escovedo's *By The Hand Of The Father*.

Founding Killing Joke drummer **Paul Ferguson** has joined New York industrial metal band Super Deformed.

Drummer **Ernesto Simpson** and percussionist **Samuel Torres** are on Latin-jazz trumpet star Arturo Sandoval's full-length stab at the keys, *My Passion For The Piano*.

Taz Bentley (Reverend Horton Heat, Tenderloin) is on Izzy Stradlin's latest album, *River*.

Nabil Ayers is on Alien Crime Syndicate's *XL From Coast To Coast*.

Hamid Drake is on William Parker's *Raining On The Moon*.

Jason Schartzman is on tour with Phantom Planet.

Dave Halpern is on Highway 9's debut, *What In Samhill?*

Paul Goldberg recently recorded soundtrack music for HBO's *Path To War* and ABC's *World Stunt Awards*. Paul is currently playing in the Los Angeles-based Steely Dan tribute band Pretzel Logic.

Zak Hanson is in the studio, laying down tracks for Hanson's next CD.

Scott Rockenfield is finishing up a new instrumental solo release. Lately Scott has also been doing a lot of composing for film, television, and multimedia projects. Rockenfield is finishing up a "high fidelity" drum loop sample library as well. And lastly, he's in the pre-production stages of his first drum instruction video.

Tony Braunagel has been in the studio with various projects. You can also see Tony on the ABC sitcom *According To Jim*, jamming with Jim Belushi's garage band.

Ryan Dusick is on Maroon5's *Songs About Jane*.

Marco Minnemann is on Paul Gilbert's *Burning Organ*.

Dave Moreno is on EDIFY's self-titled debut.

Gordon Ashe is on Rubyhorse's *Rise*.

Chad Wright is juggling touring duties with Chaka Khan and Debelah Morgan.

Good news for The Funky Drummer: **Clyde Stubblefield** is doing great after recent surgery for bladder cancer.

DRUM DATES

This month's important events in drumming history

Cozy Cole was born on October 17, 1906.

Papa Jo Jones was born on October 7, 1911.

Art Blakey was born on October 11, 1919. (He passed away in October of 1990.)

Ed Blackwell was born on October 10, 1929. (He passed away on October 7, 1992.)

Billy Higgins was born on October 11, 1936.

Billy Gladstone passed away in October of 1961.

Gene Krupa passed away on October 16, 1973.

Al Jackson passed away on October 1, 1975.

On October 8, 1963, **Elvin Jones** records *Live At Birdland* with John Coltrane.

Pink Floyd (with **Nick Mason**) arrives in New York for their first US tour on October 1, 1967.

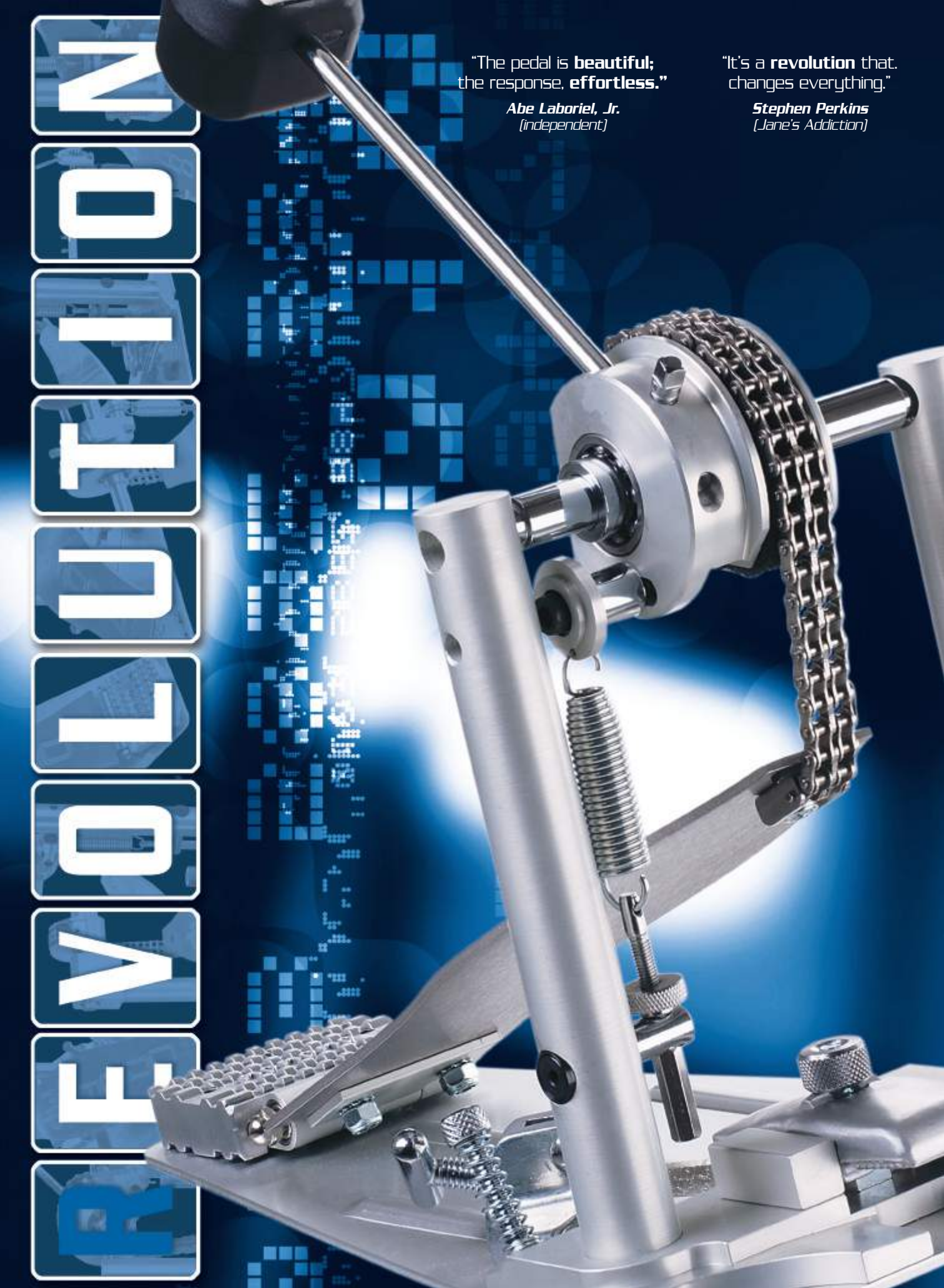
On October 3, 1970, Jack Bruce joins John McLaughlin, Larry Young, and **Tony Williams** to form the jazz-rock fusion group Lifetime. (Hear the track "Vuelta Abajo" on MD Radio, at www.moderndrummer.com.)

On October 1, 1980, Paul Simon's film *One Trick Pony* premieres with **Steve Gadd** on drums.

On October 2, 1994, **Stan Lynch** plays his last show with Tom Petty & The Heartbreakers.

Happy Birthday!

Earl Palmer (October 25, 1924)
John "Jabo" Starks (October 26, 1938)
John Guerin (October 31, 1939)
Roger Hawkins (October 16, 1945)
Mike Clark (October 3, 1946)
Trilok Gurtu (October 30, 1951)
Keith Knudsen (October 18, 1952)
Tico Torres (October 7, 1953)
AJ Pero (October 14, 1959)
Larry Mullen Jr. (October 31, 1961)
Tommy Lee (October 3, 1962)
Chad Smith (October 25, 1962)
Tony Royster Jr. (October 9, 1984)
Zak Hanson (October 22, 1985)


REVOLUTION
"The pedal is **beautiful;** the response, **effortless.**"
Abe Laboriel, Jr.
(independent)
"It's a **revolution** that. changes everything."
Stephen Perkins
(Jane's Addiction)

"Check it out. It's **incredible.**"

Steve Smith
(Vital Information)

"The Titanium **blazes** every other pedal."

Gerald Heyward
(Mary J. Blige)

"The most **unbelievably fast** pedal I've ever played."

Deen Castronovo
(Journey)

"The **radest** pedal I've ever played."

Brain
(Guns 'N' Roses)

DW 9000 TITANIUM

LIMITED EDITION BASS DRUM PEDALS

Because they combine over 25 years of experience as pedal specialists with today's most advanced materials and technologies, we think our new 9000 Titanium bass drum pedals represent a major step forward in high-tech, high-performance pedal design. But, don't just take our word for it; listen to the world's most progressive players.

Of course, besides listening to what they're saying about the 9000 Titanium, listen what these leading-edge artists are playing with it, too. Then try a Titanium for yourself at your local drum dealer and remember— whether it's evolutionary drumming or revolutionary pedals— actions speak louder than words.

Floating Rotor and Drive Shaft

To achieve the 9000's incredibly smooth action, the eccentric rotor (patent pending) is independently mounted on the horizontal drive shaft through the use of friction-reducing ball bearings.

Floating Spring Assembly

By moving the spring to the center of the pedal and maintaining the vertical alignment of the moving parts, the indirect transfer and loss of energy is virtually eliminated— further optimizing the pedal's speed and smoothness.

Titanium Footboard

Space-age Titanium is used to maintain the weight and balance of the footboard while vastly improving its strength.

Delta-Plus Multi-Bearing System

In addition to the patented DW Delta II Ball-Bearing Hinge, the 9000 utilizes super-smooth ball-bearings at the rotor, drive shaft, rocker and spring connector.

Handcrafted Aluminum Components

In order to facilitate the precision, tight tolerances and reduced mass the new 9000 technologies require, the pedal is constructed from high-grade aluminum parts that are machined, not cast.

Performance-Proven DW Technology

An abundance of DW's exclusive pedal advances have been integrated into the 9000 Series, including lightweight aluminum pedal plates and optional "Elevator" stacking heel plates.

Drum Workshop, Inc.
The Drummer's Choice® • www.dwdrums.com

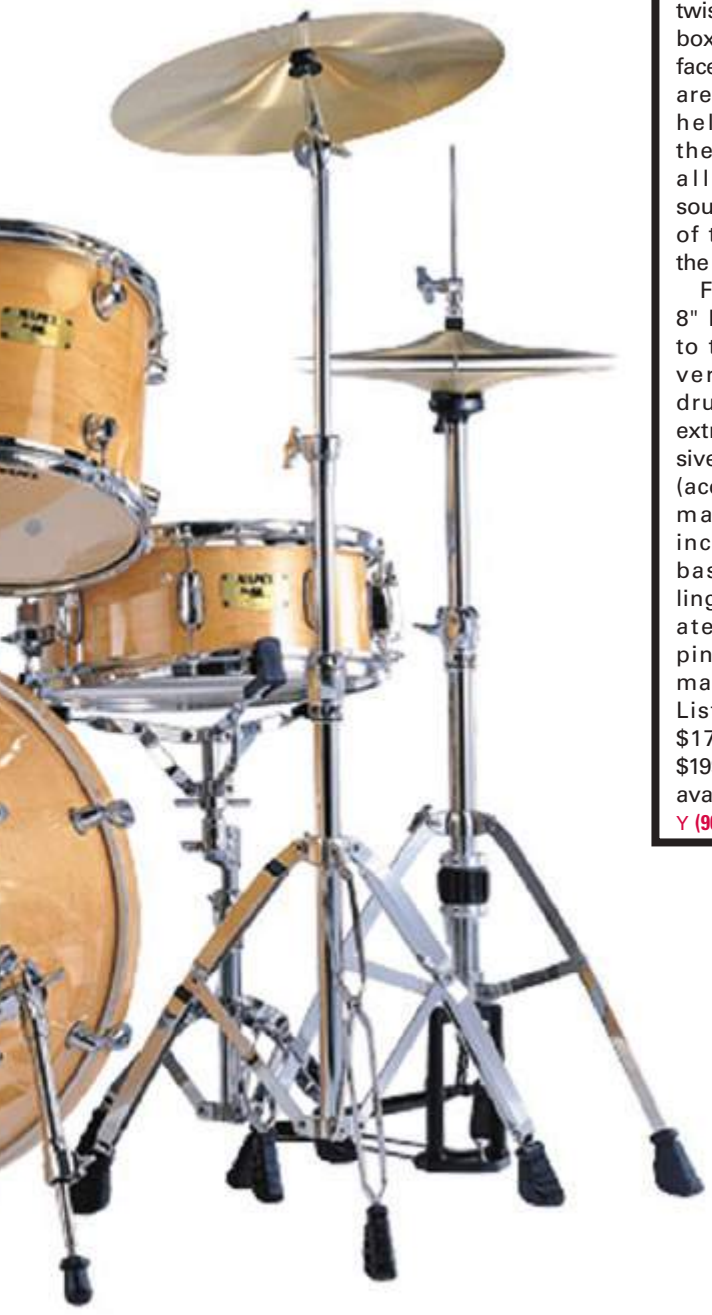
Doubling Up

Mapex Pro M Double Pedal Upgrade and V Series Double Bass Kits

Here's a couple of deals for you double bass monsters out there: First, for a limited time, Mapex's 7-ply, 6-mm maple/basswood/maple Pro M drumkit will come prepackaged with a P580 professional double bass drum pedal. The P580 features Mapex's Tri-Tonal bass drum beater, floating bass drum clamp, and dual non-slip universal linkage. These limited Pro M kits will retail for only $100 more than the standard Pro M kits featuring the single P750 pedal.

And if you want to go the full double bass route, Mapex is offering a Limited Edition V Series double bass drumkit at a price that rivals a traditional five-piece kit. The V6285D double bass set consists of two 16x22 bass drums, 10x12 and 11x13 rack toms (both suspended on a TS550 double tom stand), a 16x16 floor tom, and a 5½x14 matching wood snare drum. The hardware pack includes two bass drum pedals, one snare stand, one hi-hat stand with bass drum/hi-hat multi-clamp, one straight cymbal stand, two boom arms mounted in center-post assemblies in each bass drum, and a drum throne. Each set is available in Black, Burgundy, and Diamond Silver, and includes two sheets of Mapex Drum Tattoos, allowing the end user to personalize his or her own kit. Retail price is $1,299.

(615) 793-2050, www.mapexdrums.com.



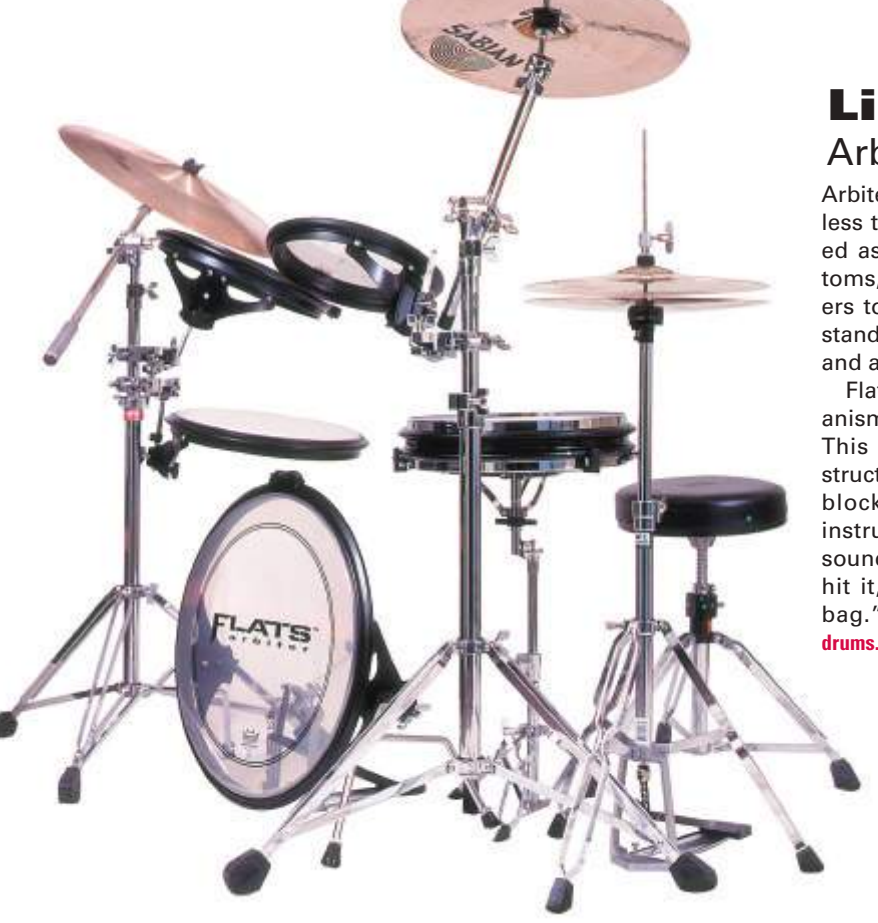
...So They Play With The Box

Mountain Rythyms Djembe Cajon

Mountain Rythyms' new Djembe Cajon adds a twist to the traditional cajon (a Peruvian/Spanish box drum) by adding its wooden playing surface to the shell design of a djembe. The drums are played while held between the player's legs, allowing the sound to flow out of the bottom of the instrument.

From the mini 8" Djembe Cajon to the larger 12" version, these drums have "an extremely expressive sound palate" (according to the manufacturer), including "deep bass and crackling highs generated from the pine shells and mahogany top." List prices are $179.99 (8x16), $199.99 (10x20), and $219.99 (12x26). Drums are available in natural, cherry, or walnut finishes.

Y **(905) 764-6543,** **drums@mountainrythym.com.**



Lighten Up!

Arbiter Flats Lite

Arbiter's Flats Lite compact drumkit is designed to sell for less than their original Flats sets (which are now marketed as Flats Pro). The Lite sets feature 10", 12", and 14" toms, a 12" snare drum, a 20" bass drum, three tom holders to attach the toms directly to double-braced cymbal stands, a hi-hat stand, a snare stand, a bass drum pedal, and a complete set of Canadian-made cymbals.

Flats Lite kits boast Arbiter's single-screw tuning mechanism, black ABS shells, and glass-filled nylon V-Clamps. This "amazingly strong" material is also used to construct the plates that connect the tom and bass receiver blocks to the drums. The result, says Arbiter, is "an instrument that's lighter than its predecessors, yet still sounds and plays like a drumset, stands still when you hit it, and fits neatly into a single, easily manageable bag." List price is $599. (877) 553-5596, www.arbiter-drums.com.

Dressed To Impress

Yamaha Stage Custom Split Lug Design And High-Gloss Finishes

Drummers in the market for an affordable kit with classic styling should check out Yamaha's Stage Custom Advantage with available split-lug design and high-gloss finishes. The drums feature 8-ply birch/ mahogany/falkata shells and a wood grain–enhancing lacquer finish. Sets include a matching wood snare drum and wood bass drum hoops, Yamaha Enhanced Sustain System (YESS) mounts, and Air-Seal System shells. The gloss finish and split lug design are available on the same kit configurations as the standard Stage Custom Advantage series, at a list price of $1,499. (714) 522-9011, www.yamahadrums.com.

Case The Joint...In Style

Modern Case Company Impresario Cymbal Vault

The Impresario Cymbal Vault is a sturdy case with a sleek, attractive design and a travel handle and wheels to take the strain out of transporting cymbals. The case is made with water-resistant fabric covering ABS plastic, and features reinforced foam for high-impact protection. The interior is finished with soft carpeting guaranteed to resist abrasion and be completely free of sulfates and other chemicals that contribute to tarnishing instruments.

The Cymbal Vault comes with two zipper pulls for easy opening and closing, a locking travel handle, high-quality casters, and a coated center wing nut to lock the cymbals in place. Color choices include Black, Navy, Khaki, Burgundy, Charcoal Gray, and Hunter Green. (906) 663-4885, www.moderncase.com.

Another Fine Mesh...

ddrum4 SE With Cast Precision Mesh Head Kit

Ddrum's updated ddrum4 SE (Signature Edition) sound module is now being offered in combination with the Cast Precision Mesh Head kit. Each pad on the kit features a mesh drumhead fitted to a rugged, cast-aluminum shell. The design is said to offer "unparalleled tracking and greatly enhanced feel," while virtually eliminating acoustic pad noise. The Cast Precision Mesh Head Pads can detect over one thousand levels of dynamics, for optimum sensitivity and response. (Cast Precision Pads with regular drumheads are still in production for those who prefer that model.)

The ddrum4 SE module holds exclusive Mega Drumkits Signature Series drum sounds recorded by Simon Phillips, Dennis Chambers, Kenny Aronoff, and Mel Gaynor, using their own typical drum and cymbal setups, drumhead choices, and tuning. The ddrum4 SE sounds can also be downloaded to any ddrum4 brain, free of charge, from www.clavia.se. The ddrum4 SE sound module lists for $1,699. The complete system with sound module and Cast Precision Mesh Head kit, Cast Cymbals, Cast Hi-Hat, and Rackstand is $3,595.

☎ (727) 519-9669, www.clavia.se.

Merrily We Roll Along

DrumRolls Drum Cases

A lot of drummers have problems fitting their drums onto the stages on which they play—let alone finding a place to store cases. Even soft bags can pose a problem. Drummer Rick Bourgoin has come up with a solution, which he calls DrumRolls.

DrumRolls are essentially drum wraps constructed of 1000 Denier Cordura on the exterior, 200 Denier nylon on the interior, and a layer of foam in between. They wrap around the drumshell with their ends overlapping and attaching to each other with hook-and-loop fabric. The sides extend over the rims from 2" to 6" (depending on the depth of the drum) and are cinched up with polypropylene drawstrings, enclosing the drum in a protective wrap. All DrumRolls are equipped with a carrying handle, a shoulder strap, and an ID card window. When laid one on top of the other with the bass drum case on the bottom, they roll up into a tight roll, taking up much less space than empty cases or bags. ☎ (425) 893-9892, www.drumrolls.com.

Talk About User-Friendly!

Gretsch "Set Up And Play" Drumset Packages

If you're eager to get playing on some nifty new gear, Kaman Music Corporation (manufacturer and worldwide distributor of Gretsch drum products) has a deal for you. Their new "Set Up And Play" drumset packages feature Gretsch drums, Gibraltar hardware, and Sabian cymbals.

With an eye to affordability, the new packages offer the most popular Gretsch Blackhawk, Catalina Elite, Catalina Stage, and Renown Maple series shell packs, Gibraltar 5600 and 6600 series hardware, and the player's choice of Sabian Solar, B8, B8 Pro, and Pro Sonix Performance Pack cymbal sets. The packages give the drummer an opportunity to build a complete drumset with cymbals, featuring top percussion brands and added-value savings. Retail prices for "Set Up And Play" packages start at $999.

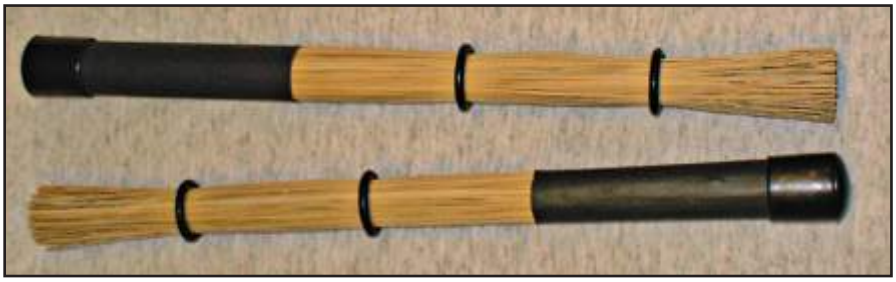
Also from Gretsch is word that new production schedules have been set up to drastically reduce lead time of the more popular colors and configurations from the Custom Series offering. The new Custom Drum Shell Bank offers the most popular drumset configurations in Gretsch's high-gloss lacquer finishes. Delivery time will now be reduced to six weeks from the previous figure of twenty-four. In addition, all Nitron covered single drums in classic sparkles, pearls, and solid finishes will now be delivered within ten weeks from order date.

☎ (860) 509-8888, www.kamanmusic.com.

A Clean Sweep

Pro-Mark Broom Sticks And Skid Proof Drumset Mat

Pro-Mark's new Broom Sticks are handmade of 100% natural broomcorn. They're said to produce "a unique sound similar to brushes, but without the metallic overtones." According to Pro-Mark, broomcorn is a rugged material that makes Broom Sticks "incredibly durable." Moveable bands allow the spread of the Broom Sticks to be adjusted for a wide variety of applications, from a heavy backbeat to traditional "stirring." They list for $24.95 per pair.



Pro-Mark's new Skid Proof Drumset Mat is made of a polymer-based material said to be lighter in weight and more durable than carpet. It eliminates the need to use spikes on bass drums, foot pedals, and hi-hat stands, and is easily folded for compact storage in drum or hardware cases. The Mat is easy to clean with ordinary soap and water, is rip- and tear-resistant, and comes with a one-year guarantee. It's priced at $54.95.

☎ (800) 233-5250, www.promark-stix.com.

There's Always Room For...

Toca Transparent Gel Congas And Bongos

You can sound sharp and look cool at the same time with new Transparent Gel congas and bongo sets from Toca's Players' Series line. This conga set with matching bongos is said to offer "a unique look with great sound performance."

Shells are made from a strong but lightweight transparent textured fiberglass material tinted to the Blue Gel finish. The transparent fiberglass has a brilliant glow when illuminated. All drums feature Toca's EasyPlay-style hoops, exclusive four-bolt tension plates, and durable texture-coated hardware. Currently available is the model 4010GELB set (with 10" and 11" congas and a sturdy double conga stand) and the 4070GELB, with matching full-sized bongos. ☎ (860) 509-8888, www.tocapercussion.com.

Put Your Foot Down

Smart Pedals For Drums

Seems like everybody's got a new idea on how to play a bass drum pedal. Piotr Onyszkanycz's concept is to drive the pedal with one's heel, instead of with the toe. Piotr feels that a heel-driven pedal simplifies the leg movement required to make a strike. The heel does the work, while the toe provides the needed support for the leg. This system is said to provide greater speed and comfort than standard pedal technique does, since the descending leg stops on the heel (while all leg muscles are relaxed) instead of on the toe (with the leg and foot muscles extended and strained). List price is $350. ☎ (905) 545-0992, www.homestead.com/playsmart/pedals.html.

And What's More

Vic Firth recently introduced a Tony Royster Jr. Signature stick. The young drumming star won the Up & Coming category of the 2000 *Modern Drummer* Readers Poll, amazed audiences at the 1996 Montreal Drumfest and the 1997 *Modern Drummer* Drum Festival, anchored the Nickelodeon House Band (directed by Paul Shaffer), and can be seen on his Warner Bros. video *Common Ground*. Tony's stick—a takeoff on the SD4 Combo—is 16⅛" long and .547" in diameter. It's crafted in hickory for extra weight and durability, but its barrel tip assures sensitive drum and cymbal sounds. **(781) 326-3455, www.vicfirth.com.**

Drop The Needle, the culmination of **Billy Martin**'s breakbeat and remix project, is now available. The album features Billy's own breakbeats, along with the input of special guests like Miho Hatori, Jennifer Charles, Chris Wood, John Medeski, DJ Olive, Cyro Baptista, and Calvin Weston. **www.amuletrecords.com.**

Gerd Stegner of Bottenbach, Germany handcrafts brand-new replicas of Trixon drums under his **ST Drums** brand. Kits are available in beech or maple, with 3-ply, 7.5-mm shells. Heads are special-production models made by Remo. **st-drums@t-online.de, www.stdrums.de.**

Slug Percussion's newest Batter Badge Vented Impact Pad features tattoo-style Rose and Thorns graphics. The badge protects the "sweet spot" on a drumhead, in order to preserve tone and extend the head's playing life. Its .01" clear polycarbonate film is said to enhance strike articulation and attack while creating a dent-resistant diaphragm on the drumhead. The "vented" design allows the drumhead to flex and resonate with controlled decay for powerful projection. Retail price is $8.95. **(312) 432-0553, www.slugdrums.com.**

CLE Drums is a new custom drum crafter from Maryland. The company offers snare drums and kits made with 100% maple Keller shells in 5, 6, 7, 8, 10, or more plies, aluminum (standard) or brass (optional) lugs, and hand-polished bearing edges for "maximum warmth and sustain." Available finishes include high-gloss lacquer and satin oil varnish (said to have the look of satin oil with the protection of varnish). **(410) 876-7950, www.cledrums.com.**

Michael White

On Tour and in The Studio with

George Benson

Maze featuring Frankie Beverly

Al Jarreau

Steely Dan

Richard Elliot

George Duke

Earth, Wind and Fire

Marcus Miller...

and **Starclassic Drums**

drums:	**Starclassic Maple**
sizes:	16 x 22 Bass Drum with Sound Focus Rings 7 x 8, 8 x 10, 10 x 12 Toms with Sound Focus Rings 14 x 14 Floor Tom with Sound Focus Rings 16 x 16 Floor Tom with Sound Focus Rings 5 1/2 x 14 Custom Brass Snare
color:	Violet Shade
throne:	HT730 Ergo-Rider
pedal:	HP900PTW Iron Cobra Powerglide Double
hi-hat stand:	HH905 Iron Cobra Leverglide

"I vary my set-up depending on whether it's a gig that's more groove oriented, where there's not a whole lot of fills, or something more melodic. On the tracks I just did for Al Jarreau or on my work with George Benson, adding a third tom across the front really helps. I got into placing one floor tom on the left about 15 years ago with the Pointer Sisters. If you play a certain fill with a right hand lead, it's sounds pretty much the same as everyone else. Play the same fill with a left-hand lead and it's almost like the feel is inverted because the phrase and accents are in a different place.

"But what's uniquely mine about my kit isn't so much set-up, it's the sound. My drum sound has evolved in the last four or five years. Before that, people would put on a record and recognize me by the feel. Now they're starting to know my playing just by the sound.

"A big part of my sound is how I tune my drums. Tuning is definitely an art. I don't just tune them one way. In the studio, I actually tune my toms to each track. Sometimes I tune toms melodically, for example so each tom is the note of a major triad. But sometimes I tune them just for tone, for a feel, like today's session with Richard Elliot. The drums sounded so good! The engineers and all the guys were saying, "man, your drums sound incredible." You'd be surprised how many cats ask me to tune their snare drums and drum sets so they can sound like mine.

"But I have to tell them, 'I don't think your drums will sound like mine without the sound rings. Sound Focus Rings are amazing; they're just magical. With the rings I don't have to put tape on them to get that warm sound. My drums are wide open now, which is a totally new adventure for me. Of course, some people may not dig that sound so I understand why Tama offers the option.

"The die-cast hoops give a lot of body and the Iron Cobra pedals, I love 'em. But the two-legged hi-hat is my favorite piece of hardware. I can tilt it up and back so I can play the top side of the hi-hats without leaning over to get a real clear sound when I play doubles or accents. The only thing I don't like about my set is when I don't have it. Fortunately most of the people who hire me out want me to bring my sound so they afford me the luxury of using my own drums. I just really feel comfortable with my drums because I can't compromise my sound for anything."

For the new Tama Drum & Hardware catalog, send $3.00 to: Tama Dept. MDD19, PO Box 886, Bensalem, PA 19020 or PO Box 2009, Idaho Falls, ID 83403. **www.tama.com**

Premier Cabria Drumkit

The British Are Coming...Again!

HITS

quality package at a reasonable price

versatile ball joint on tom holder

highly responsive, conga-like toms

beautiful appearance

MISSES

snare rattles

14" hanging tom does not work as floor tom

by Will Romano

As part of its campaign to revitalize its brand image, Premier Percussion recently revamped its entry-level Cabria kit. While this set has always targeted working musicians interested in getting solid drums for an affordable price, the Cabria now includes special features that the British drummaker says give the drums greater musical and cosmetic appeal.

As anyone in the musical instrument business—or any business for that matter—will tell ya: You don't get something for nothing. So the question becomes, can the UK-based company continue to make quality instruments for cost-conscious musicians? Let's find out.

Shells And Suspension

The kit we were given for review, the Cabria 7393, is a five-piece fusion-style set in a classy metallic wine red wrap. The drums feature 7-ply shells: six plies of mahogany and one inner ply of basswood. In keeping with Premier's "out with the old" motif, gone are the long "old-fashioned" high-tension lugs and signature "P" badge, in favor of shorter, bullet-shaped tension brackets and metal emblems emblazoned with the letter "C." The kit is

finished, polished, assembled, and tuned by hand in Premier's UK factory.

The drums also feature Premier's own suspension mounting system, which is new to the Cabria line. There's been much debate in the industry as to whether suspension mounts actually improve a drum's sound. When a mount is applied to the drum hoop incorrectly, or when pressure is improperly exerted on a drum, its tones and overtones can be completely deadened. Premier's mount, supported by the 4396 Roklok double tom holder, is "attached" to the drum via four tension rods. At no point is contact made with the actual shell. This allows the drums to swing and vibrate without hindrance. I don't have a Ph.D. in physics, but it seemed as though this system did indeed "free up" the drum.

Conga-Like Toms

All toms were fitted with clear, thin, Remo Everplay heads on top and bottom. The 10" and 12" toms generated a multilayered, almost conga-like throatiness—perfect, I thought, for pop, jazz, or even world music. Depending on where I hit the heads, I achieved a multitude of interesting overtones. According to Premier, this hyper-responsiveness can be explained by a combination of the suspension mounts and the 45° countercut shells, which give the drums sensitivity all the way to the hoop.

The 14" tom, which was hanging from one of the two boom stands that came with this kit, behaved similarly to the 10" and 12". However, the drum's natural timbre was a bit high for my liking. It just didn't give me the low end of a traditional floor tom. I eventually tuned it down, but then I had the problem of the head being too slack. I finally corralled a decent tone, but sacrificed response.

Bass Drum And Snare

I got the 22" bass drum up and running after only a little bit of fine-tuning. Equipped with a clear Everplay batter head with "frosted" edges, the drum produced a nice thud without any muffling. The steel spurs anchored the kit fairly well on a carpet. Premier's chain-driven bass drum pedal, clamped directly to the wood hoop, was neither the worst nor the best I've ever played. I found the beater a little "floppy," so I changed to a tighter, rounder one of my own in order to improve the attack. After that the drum thumped away without being annoyingly obtrusive.

The wood snare drum was a mystery. Though the mahogany/basswood shell and a Remo coated Everplay head worked to improve the drum's innate quality, there was no getting around what I felt were flat, inferior tones. And even after I finessed its tension dial, the snare-holding strap still allowed the snares to rattle. The throw-off itself, which is activated and deactivated in a side-to-side fashion rather than up and down, is not an easy, "one-flick" device. This could be dangerous during a gig.

Ironically, I was convinced that the snare drum was given greater resonance than it might have otherwise produced because of Premier's 3503 snare *stand*. The snare basket is held off-center from the base. The drum sound was allowed to breathe, and I could position the base of the stand so it was out of my way and still have the playing surface at a comfortable striking distance.

Hardware

Speaking of the snare stand leads us to the subject of hardware. Since moving a portion of their manufacturing to Taiwan, Premier has been able to give the customer added value. Lower manufacturing costs means more nifty features, such as the kit's highly versatile ball joint featured on the Roklok double tom holder—a V-shaped piece of equipment usually reserved for the company's higher-end kits.

Besides being a nice addition to the Cabria, the Roklok is multi-functional. Premier says that the design actually promotes sound reinforcement (that is, as vibration works its way up through the tom arm, it gets trapped at the joint). While I can't prove or disprove this point, I do know that the rotation of the joint made the drums very easy to maneuver without being too loosey-goosey. And though I didn't take advantage of it, an insert was available on top of the holder for a splash or a third tom.

I was most impressed with the performance of the 3505 hi-hat stand. Its fast-action pedal and well-balanced center of gravity kept it steady and stable. And as mentioned earlier, the Cabria comes with two sturdy Premier 3506 boom stands that said "mid-range" more than "low-end." The sheer bulk of the stands was needed when I clamped the 14" tom to one of the booms. Overall, the stands and drum hardware posed no major headaches during set-up or break-down.

Conclusion

If you're looking for a top-flight, recording-quality kit, you've come to the wrong place. However, the Cabria, even with its minor drawbacks, would be a good choice for a solid gigging kit. The sounds generated were distinctive, and considering the craftsmanship and the fact that a hardware package is thrown in, the kit is a great value for the price.

THE NUMBERS

Configuration: Review kit consisted of 8x10 and 9x12 rack toms, an 11x14 hanging "floor" tom, a 5½x14 snare, and a 16x22 bass drum, all finished in a Wine-Red covering. Other finishes available include Black, Metallic Blue, and Metallic Silver. Kit comes with 3000 series hardware, including snare stand, hi-hat stand, two boom cymbal stands, and bass drum pedal.

List price: **$995**

Note: A five-piece lacquer-finish kit with 3000 series hardware retails for $1,295. Colors include Emerald Green, Rosewood, Pacific Blue, and Topaz.

Y (800) 486-4424,
www.premier-percussion.com.

New Pearl Hardware

Stands That Deliver

HITS

RH2000 cable remote hi-hat duplicates the feel of a traditional stand

air-suspension tips on S2000 snare stand increase drum resonance

DR501/503 drum racks have fully integrated joining hardware

MISSES

compression spring on RH2000 can make small cymbals hard to close

S2000 can lose stability as drum diameter and depth increases

drum racks are very heavy

by Paul Bielewicz

Pearl has been busy lately, designing and building several innovative new stands. They've also upgraded their rack system. Let's look at all this nifty support gear.

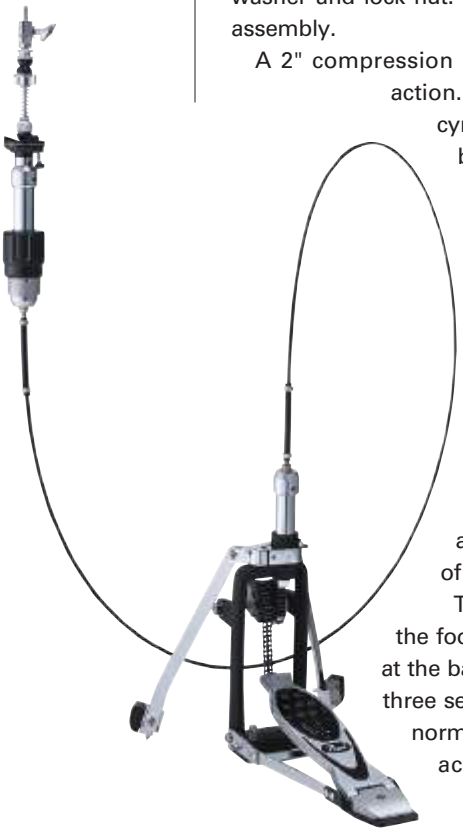
RH2000 Remote Hi-Hat

The features of Pearl's new RH2000 remote cable hi-hat stand read like a sports-car ad: Posilink twin-cam drive system, color-coded interchangeable cams, VariSet footboard angle adjustment, PowerShifter pedal, TractionPlate footboard, swiveling dual legs, spring-tension dial, and reversible rubber/spiked-tipped feet. About all that's missing are Corinthean leather bucket seats.

What's cool about a remote hi-hat is the positioning flexibility it affords. Because the cymbal holder and the pedal are connected by a cable rather than a rigid stand, the hi-hat cymbals can be positioned up to seven feet away from the pedal, anywhere on the kit.

The RH2000's upper section is a $1\frac{1}{8}$" diameter tube, with the cymbals on the upper end and a spring-tension adjustment dial on the lower end. The bottom section consists of the pedal and dual legs. Between these two sections is the cable. The lower cymbal sits on a rubber cup, and is held in place by a rubber washer and lock nut. The upper cymbal is held in place with the hi-hat clutch assembly.

A 2" compression spring is placed between the cymbals to improve the action. I found that this spring does not allow 12" or smaller cymbals to fully close, so such cymbals should be assembled to the stand without it.



Mounting the RH2000 to a drum rack is simple. All you need is a spare rack clamp. Mounting the hats to an existing stand can prove slightly more difficult. You'll need a mounting adapter, which is not included. Any standard adapter that can hold $1\frac{1}{8}$" tubing will suffice, providing that adapter is long enough to keep the hi-hat cymbals from hitting the stand they're mounted to.

Feel And Features

If I'd had a blindfold on, I would never have known that the RH2000 was a cable hi-hat stand. It feels *just* like a regular hi-hat stand. On top of that, it includes a number of impressive adjustability features.

The VariSet feature allows the user to adjust the angle of the footboard. The PowerShifter feature (adjusted by a key bolt at the base of the footplate) allows the footplate to slide between three settings—instantly changing the feel of the pedal to heavy, normal, or light. Four interchangeable cams further tailor the action of the pedal, while Pearl's TractionPlate system

allows the user to change the pattern and amount of traction on the footplate.

The overall spring tension of the hi-hat can be increased or decreased by adjusting a knob below the lower cymbal. The angle and swivel of the stand's legs can be adjusted with a drumkey. And the tip of each leg can be converted from rubber tip (for use on a hard floor) to a spike tip for use on carpet.

Whether used as an accessory or as a main hi-hat stand, Pearl's RH2000 offers nearly everything a drummer could ask for. Its smooth action and nearly infinite adjustability make it a formidable entry in the elite field of cable remote hi-hats.

S2000 Snare Drum Stand

Drumkit snare drums today range from tiny 10" sopranos to huge 15" marching-style drums. Pearl's S2000 snare drum stand strives to accommodate all these sizes while offering increased adjustability.

The S2000 consists of a basket-style upper section in which the drum itself is seated, and a double-braced tripod that supports the basket. Putting these two together isn't as simple as it sounds. The stand comes with the tube of the basket section folded. If the tube is unfolded incorrectly, the stand can be assembled with the tilter wingnut backwards, which makes tightening the nut nearly impossible. It took a few minutes of frustration before I determined that I had assembled it wrong.

Features

Among the S2000's innovations are Air Suspension rubber tips that grip the drum. The hook-style grips have a metal backing for increased sturdiness and an open center section that allows greater cushioning of the drum. This, in turn, provides for increased resonance.

The S2000 also has telescoping arms that can be adjusted to fit drums from 10" to 16" in diameter. The arms are indexed with marks in half-inch increments, so it's easy to find just the size you need.

The Uni-Lock tilter on the S2000 allows the drum to be tilted towards or away from the drummer as well as from side to side. Both adjustments are controlled by a single wingnut. A large, triangle-shaped nut is used to loosen or tighten the grip of the basket. The stand's legs feature convertible rubber-to-spike tips.

Performance

Pearl recommends adjusting the telescoping arms before placing the drum into the basket. Heeding their advice, I adjusted the arms to the 14" mark for use with a standard 6x14 snare. I had to open the basket completely in order to fit the drum into the hook-style grips. Once the drum was situated, I tightened the key bolts to secure the telescoping arms, and then adjusted the triangle nut to tighten the basket, gripping the drum.

The stand offered ample adjustment possibilities, both forward/backward and left/right. When I tried positioning a 14" drum to the extremes, the stand became unstable and wobbly, but at more "standard" positioning the adjustability worked quite well. When I tried the same adjustments with a 10" drum, I was able to adjust the angle and tilt to greater extremes.

I wanted to test the stand with a 16" drum, but I didn't have a 16" snare. (I don't think I've ever *seen* one.) So I used a 14x16 floor tom. Even at the stand's lowest setting, the drum was still much too high to be played comfortably, and even small adjustments in the angle made the drum lose stability. I therefore wouldn't recommend this stand for use with such large-sized toms. But it is well suited for holding toms from 10" to 14" in size. In fact, when using the S2000 with various-sized toms, I noticed that the Air Suspension tips seemed to increase each drum's resonance. This is good news, since some snare stands can actually choke off a tom's sound when the basket is clamped to the drum.

With its 10"–16" adjustable telescoping arms, wide positioning range, and substantial strength, the S2000 snare stand has more versatility than most of its predecessors. It's a nice new approach to a stand that has been relatively unchanged in design for many years.

DR503 And DR501 Drum & Percussion Racks

Pearl's DR503 three-sided rack and DR501 bridge rack feature cymbal/tom-holding brackets that attach to the tops of the front legs, as well as longer feet for increased stability. The DR503 consists of three 36" square-tube horizontal bars and four 33" cylindrical legs. Each of the legs has a 19" square-tube floor bar as its foot. The DR501 is identical except that it has one horizontal bar, two legs, and two feet.

Each of Pearl's crossbars has an integrated clamping system that allows assembly to the legs without the use of external hardware. Each clamp consists of a swiveling thumbscrew and a hinged section that opens to a full 90°. It's a very easy system to use.

Assembling the legs to the feet also involves fully integrated hardware. Each leg has a 3/4"-diameter male rod that mates with a female receptacle on the foot section. Each of these receptacles contains a thumbscrew and a hex-screw that are used to tighten the foot/leg assembly. While this should've been simple enough to assemble, a problem lay in the adjustable portion of the receptacle on the feet. Each consists of two halves: a rigid stationary half, and a spring-loaded half that's tightened with the thumb- and hex-screws. Unfortunately, the adjustable spring-loaded half can easily become crooked, preventing the male rod of the leg from being inserted into the receptacle.

Barring that one problem, once each foot was affixed to each leg and tightened, the foot/leg assembly was rigid enough to stand on its own. That can be a huge convenience when it comes to assembling the crossbars to the legs. Once that assembly has been completed, supplied memory locks serve not only to hold each crossbar rigidly in place, but also to dictate their proper location.

Functionality

Tom and cymbal arms are held to the rack either by Pearl's unique rack clamps or by the new cymbal/tom brackets that can be attached to the tops of the legs. Each rack clamp consists of a square bar clamp that attaches to the rack, and a circular pipe clamp used to hold tom mounts and cymbal arms. A limitation to this design is that each pipe clamp can only receive 3/4" or 7/8" tom or cymbal arms. This does not allow for use of smaller mounts, such as 10-mm L-rods, 3/8" cowbell rods, or anything with a diameter smaller than 3/4".

Pearl's rack design lacks flexibility in terms of component positioning. The pipe clamps assemble to the crossbars at exactly 90°, and those clamps hold tom mounts or cymbal arms at exactly 90°. Angle adjustability for rack toms and cymbals is thus limited to that of the tom mount or cymbal arm being held by the rack.

On the other hand, the rigidity of the square crossbar more than compensates for any positioning difficulties. Never again will you have to endlessly tighten the thumbscrew on a round pipe clamp because a tom just won't seem to stop slipping.

Heavy Duty

In an effort to reduce overall weight, the DR503's steel legs are countered by aluminum feet and horizontal crossbars. Even so, it weighs in at a hefty 45 lbs. But what the rack lacks in portability, it makes up for in strength and durability. Once assembled, each horizontal crossbar could easily hold the weight of a full-grown man (which is nice to know if your overzealous lead singer feels the need to climb on the drumkit).

Pearl's DR503 and DR501 racks offer simplicity, ease of assembly, and innovative features. For those who crave the strength and durability that only a rack can provide, you can't ask for much more.

THE NUMBERS

RH2000 cable remote hi-hat pedal:	$389
S2000 snare stand:	$169
DR503 drum rack:	$499
DR501 drum rack:	$249

Y (615) 833-4477, www.pearldrum.com.

Quick Looks

Vic Firth Blades

Chap Ostrander

Okay, once you finish with all the "spatula" jokes, it's time to take a serious look at Vic Firth's new Blades. After all, at the Musikmesse held last March in Frankfurt, Germany, Vic Firth Blades received the MIPA award for the most innovative drumstick product of 2001.

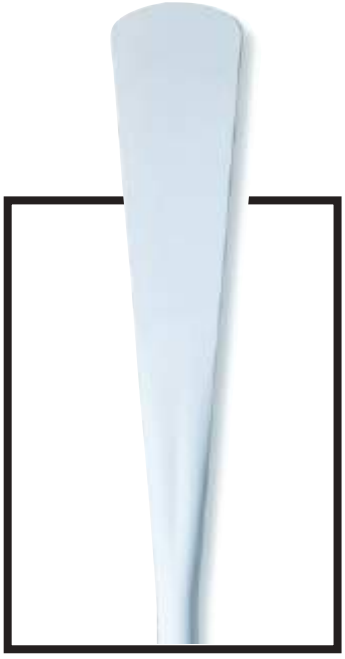
These new percussion tools are 14½" in length, and the handles are .650" thick. They're constructed from a high-density copolymer plastic that retains the "memory" of its shape while staying flexible. This gives them the ability to snap back and keep their shape after striking. They can also stand up to rimshots.

I have to admit that when I first tried the Blades, I was a bit skeptical about their effectiveness. I was soon proven wrong, however. When used with the flat side down, they produced a pronounced "slap" that was loud and cutting. This was best heard on hand percussion instruments such as bongos. When I used them on a drumkit in the flat position, I had to exercise wrist and finger control over the action, since the flat edge was not bouncy like sticks. The "slap" was there, but the Blades were so flexible that it took some effort to make them behave.

When I turned the Blades and played with the edge, I found them to be very much like sticks in their response. This applied to drums, hand percussion, cowbells, wood blocks, cymbals, and whatever else got in my way. (I'd caution against their use full-time on drums. It seems to me that their narrow, straight edge would eventually damage a drumhead.)

If your gig requires you to play drumset and percussion in quick succession (or even if you're just looking for a new sound on a single drum), you should definitely try a set of Blades. They're priced at $19 per pair.

Y (781) 326-3455, www.vicfirth.com.



Premier Modern Classic Snare Drums

Vintage Looks With Contemporary Sounds

HITS

exceptional versatility

hand-tuned for play-out-of-box action

Nickel Drumworks throw-offs

"Hand Built" badge gives vintage appearance

MISSES

steel snare lacked range

by Will Romano

Premier's new Modern Classic snare line attempts to blend contemporary drum technology with traditional design. According to the company, 45° countercut bearing edges and deep, narrow snare beds add up to increased sensitivity. The bearing edges are said to make these snares responsive all the way to the hoop, and the beds were designed to allow the snare wires to sit flat against the bottom head.

Each drum features a Remo Everplay coated Ambassador batter head and a hazy Ambassador snare-side head, a Nickel Drumworks Piston Drive throw-off, a classy badge that reads "Hand built in England," and shiny, hand-polished finishes. Let's see how they performed.

7x14 Brass

As soon as I pulled this drum out of the box and started playing, I knew it was a live wire. To test its range, I lowered the tuning and fiddled with the snare tension, and was rewarded with a cannon-like "thud." When cranked up, the drum produced delightfully "pingy" textures typical of a piccolo snare. Depending on where I hit the head, the drum rang out with a different note. I attributed this phenomenon to two things: the throw-off/strainer and the bearing edges. Some snare strainers give drummers only two choices: all snare or all

tom. But with the Nickel Drumworks strainer, every twist of the tension knob had a distinct effect on the complexion of the sound. And I had to agree with Premier that the deep snare beds (and resulting closeness of the snare wires), as well as the sharp bearing edges, did profoundly affect the sound.

5½x14 Brass

I didn't find any of the "clankiness" inherent in some metal-shell drums here. Instead, I felt all the warmth associated with wood. When I struck the head dead center, a nice "whack" emanated. As with the 7" drum, overtones were never stunted, even with dampening. *Without* muffling, my full strokes produced resounding cracks, and my ghost notes were clear and sharp. Rimshots pinched my senses. This snare is very capable of being your go-to drum when you want a change of pace in the studio or on stage.

5½x14 Steel

Though it looked sharp, I often found this drum to be too dry and limp. As I played with various tunings, I really didn't like what I heard. Wrenching up the lug nuts did little for the sensitivity. When I inspected the underside of the snare, I noticed a warp on the bottom bearing edge, but I'm not sure if this had any negative impact. Overall, this drum performed best when kept at mid-range tuning.

4x14 Black Maple

If you want a lightweight (as in easy to carry) piccolo that can be used in many applications, this 6-ply maple drum will do the trick. Its range of tonal options belied its somewhat "squashed" appearance. Though it didn't have much bottom end (what would you expect from a 4" shell?), it was highly responsive. I was convinced that the short, stubby tuning rods allowed the shell greater resonance and produced a nice, punchy snap perfect for jazz, pop, and light rock settings.

7x13 Maple

It was incredible to hear how much striking this drum at different locations produced different tones. Even a side-stick stroke was surprisingly melodious. And when I dropped the snares and played the drum as a tom, it exploded in an ear-piercing pop. Overall, this is a solid package with distinctive characteristics that really opened my ears.

7½x12 Birch (With Suspension Collar)

Outfitted with Premier's own suspension mounting bracket and a 16-wire snare set, this drum was pulling double shifts. Using Premier's 4396 tom-mounting system, I placed the drum where my 10" rack tom would normally be, directly in front of me. The easy-to-use Nickel Drumworks throw-off allowed me to switch the drum from snare to tom and back again in the heat of playing. As a snare, it was quite "chatty," allowing me to hear every stroke. Snookered into thinking that this box-like drum was a sonic weakling, I was taken aback when a throaty sound emerged.

When I lowered the tension a bit, I realized that the snare had a good mid-range, as well as a not-too-raucous low end. When I struck the drum with the snares off, it sent out a loud, high "plunk." Though I found that I could massage a slightly deeper tone out of it, it served best as a high-end tom, blending perfectly with the other kit drums. It could be used as an auxiliary snare off to your side, or even as your primary snare (if you can maneuver around the mounting hardware, or find a snare stand appropriate for its size).

Overall Lowdown

Premier's Modern Classics have sensational range, sensitivity, clarity, and volume. While some models have a few drawbacks, generally these are high-quality snares that should perform well in a wide range of musical settings.

THE NUMBERS

7½x12 Birch (natural birch or black lacquer)	$495
5½x14 Brass (natural brass)	$525
7x14 Brass (natural brass)	$550
5½x14 Steel (chrome steel)	$525
4x14 Maple (natural maple or black lacquer)	$475
7x13 Maple (natural maple or black lacquer)	$515

(also available but not reviewed: 7x14 Maple at $530)

(800) 486-4424, www.premier-percussion.com.

Wuhan S Series Cymbals

Shine On!

HITS

full-bodied "jazz" tonality with added clarity

extremely attractive prices

one-year replacement warranty

by Rick Van Horn

The Wuhan name has been synonymous with "China" cymbals for generations. But it wasn't until 2000 that Wuhan introduced Western-style cymbals to the US market. Despite their heritage, those new cymbals were definitely an unknown quantity.

I reviewed a batch of Wuhan Western-style cymbals in the November 2000 *MD*. In a nutshell, I was impressed. They were professional-level cymbals that could compete with those of any other brand in terms of sound and quality. Their one-year replacement warranty and low price made them all the more appealing. About the only thing the new Wuhan line *didn't* have going for it was a wide selection of models.

Well, that situation has changed. In the two years since my review appeared, Wuhan has introduced two new series into its Western-style cymbal line. The thin to medium-thin Traditional line that I reviewed has been beefed up with Rock models for heavier players. In addition, Wuhan has introduced the S Series—which, it turns out, are really terrific cymbals created by mistake!

A Little Background

Universal Percussion is the Wuhan distributor in the US, and its owner, Tom Shelley, has been instrumental in the development of Wuhan's Western-style cymbals. Tom wanted a line of dark, jazz-oriented cymbals that could compete specifically with the esoteric hand-hammered lines of the other major brands. But he also knew that his cymbals would have to have some unique characteristic to help set them apart in the marketplace.

Wuhan S Series cymbals are generally made in thin to medium-thin weights, and they're carefully hand-hammered and hand-lathed—just like the "jazz" cymbals of other brands. But to give them that unique characteristic I mentioned, Tom decided to have them buffed to a brilliant shine. (The "S" actually stands for "Shining" Series.)

At first, Tom was disappointed at the outcome. His cymbals didn't have a dark, washy, jazzy tone. At least, not 100%. What they *do* have (and this is where things get good) is a certain *amount* of that jazzy quality, coupled with a shimmering high-end clarity and projection that brings them into a more contemporary vein.

The Best Of Both Worlds

Several major manufacturers have recently been promoting lines that tout "deep, dark tonalities" and "extra projection" at the same time. Such cymbals are intended to offer some of the esoteric musical nature of old jazz models to drummers who play in more amplified settings. The Wuhan S models are absolutely perfect for that application. To quote their own flyer: "The buffing process boosts the S Series cymbals' shimmering high end and clarity, adding to their presence and projection. Yet the cymbals retain all their depth of tone, sustain, and underlying body." I couldn't have said it better myself.

Splash

There's only one splash in the series: a 10". But it's a sweetheart. Its sound is quick and glassy, as a splash's sound should be. But it has enough depth and tonality to make a statement as a *cymbal*, not just a sound effect.

Hi-Hats

The hi-hats, which are available in 13" and 14" sizes, are

warm and breathy, but with a particularly nice stick-attack sound. The high-end portion of their frequency spectrum gives them plenty of "chick." In fact, they might actually be a little loud for a pure acoustic jazz gig (the 14" more so than the 13"). But for electric jazz, pop, or any other medium-volume situation, they'd work beautifully.

Crashes

This is where the S Series really shines (no pun intended). The crashes are simply outstanding—and multi-faceted. If they're played gently (as in an acoustic jazz setting), they stay restrained. Their dark tonalities come through, but they don't really open up—which means they wouldn't overpower the music. On the other hand, if they're struck more forcefully (as in an electric jazz or pop setting), their brilliant shimmer comes to the fore, and they cut through cleanly while *still* retaining that underlying depth and body. It's just a joy to hear.

Pitches get lower as the sizes get larger, and sustain increases (as you'd expect). By the time you get to the 18" crash-ride and the 19" crash, you have cymbals with real potential as alternate ride sources—nice bells, dark washes, and sufficient stick clarity to project clean rhythm patterns. And, of course, they're *really* powerful crashes.

Rides

The 20" ride is actually a little on the thin side, while the 20" heavy ride corresponds to many "medium-heavy" rides from other manufacturers. The thinner model has a little more wash and undertone, and can build to a roar if played heavily. But it percolates along beautifully when played lightly with a 7A or 5A stick.

The heavy ride would be more appropriate for general-purpose use—especially where a clear "ping" is needed to carry through the music. Even so, that ever-present "jazz-cymbal" percentage is never lost. "General-purpose," in this case, does not mean "without character."

And The Good News Is...

Simply put, Wuhan S Series cymbals cost less than any other hand-hammered cymbals of comparable sound and quality. (In fact, they cost less than some machine-hammered cymbals.) And they come with a one-year replacement warranty. Considering their wonderful sound characteristics and attractive appearance, it's hard to imagine what more one could ask for.

THE NUMBERS

10" splash:	$ 99
13" hi-hats (pair):	$227
14" hi-hats (pair):	$272
16" crash and Fast crash:	$165
17" crash:	$181
18" crash and crash-ride:	$189
19" crash:	$215
20" ride and heavy ride:	$225

☎ (800) 282-0110, www.universalpercussion.com

Quick Looks

Gauger Percussion Flairz

Flairz, from Gauger Percussion, are designed to match brush-playing concepts with today's volume levels, which can't be met by traditional brushes.

One model of Flairz comes with a set of standard brush wires. A second model looks like a bundle of snare wires cut to the same length. The stiffness of these wires gives greater projection than that of traditional wire brushes, especially on cymbals. In addition, a small spring wrapped around the bottom of the wires near the handle allows you to change the playing response by sliding the spring up or down the surface of the coiled wires. This lets you tighten or loosen the sound to fit your needs.

The handles are molded from a special polymer and thermoplastic formula that provides a solid grip in all situations. Gauger's modular design allows you to switch between types of wire quickly, moving from coils to straight wire. Loosening a grommet at the top of the handles lets you slide either set of wires down inside for storage and carrying. The grommet screws in, so the change is a quick one.

I got to use both models in show and jazz settings, and they felt great. The straight-wire model felt like sensitive brushes, and the coiled-wire setup offered a lot of choices for different sounds. The coils seemed to spread, or "flare out" (get it?) when I struck cymbals or drums smartly. They also produced varied sounds, depending on how I used them against the edge of the cymbals, bells, or whatever. The sliding spring was very effective in controlling the tightness of the coils.

Either set of wires can be partly retracted into the handles to let you further tailor the sound, as well as to pack them for travel. The coiled wires should last four to five times longer than the straight wires. The price of the straight-wire models is $29.95, while the coiled wires are $32.95. Straight wire replacements list at $6.95, while coiled wires list at $10.95. Like other inventions from the fertile mind of Gary Gauger, these new brushes are worthy of checking out.

☎ (952) 933-8497, www.gaugerpercussion.com.

Chap Ostrander

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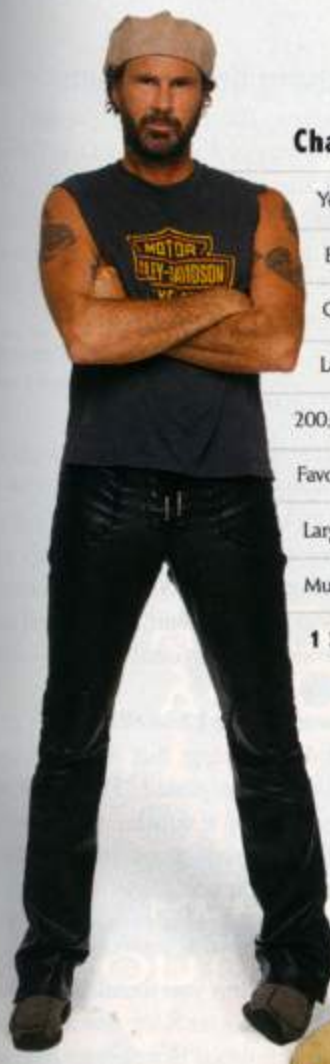

Chad Smith

Years playing – 32

Band – Red Hot Chili Peppers

Concerts – Lost count after 5,216

Last tour – 24 countries

200,000 Air Miles

Favorite venue – Red Square, Moscow, Russia

Largest attendance – 350,000 Woodstock '94

Musical influence – My brother, Brad

1 Sonically Matched cymbal set

Milton Worthington

Years playing – Almost a whole year

Band – Sooky & the Insomniacs

Concerts – Brother's high school dance

Last tour – Hometown

48 kilometers on the family van

Favorite venue – Churchill Boy's Academy

Largest attendance – Almost 90

Musical influence – Chad Smith

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Roland RPM-1 Rhythm Coach Pack

Practicing Made Fun...And Silent!

HITS

silent, natural-feeling mesh pad

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many built-in teaching aids

by Rick Long

Various articles in this magazine have discussed how electronic drums can help solve the noise problems associated with drumming—especially when it comes to practicing at home. But the cost of an entire electronic kit may be prohibitive for some drummers and their families. Roland has addressed this issue by developing the RPM-1 Rhythm Coach Pack. It's an electronic practice system that provides not only a quiet means of rehearsing, but also built-in teaching aids designed to help develop drumming skills.

The RPM-1 Rhythm Coach Pack includes the RM-2 Rhythm Coach module, an RP-2 V-Practice Pad, a short cable that connects the pad to the module, four alkaline batteries, a drumkey, and the owner's manual. The Rhythm Coach module and the V-Practice Pad are available separately but are designed to be used together. They come pre-assembled when you buy them in the Rhythm Coach Pack.

The Brains Of The Outfit

The big difference between the Rhythm Coach Pack and all other practice pads is the Rhythm Coach Module. It's a small version of an electronic drumkit module, with features specific to skill development rather than to performing. The module has a curved bottom that allows it to mate up against the V-Practice Pad. Two drumkey-adjustable bolts hold the module onto the pad.

The most obvious function of the module is to operate as a metronome. An LED screen displays the current tempo setting (and helps to guide you through the other available modes). A Tap button lets you tap out a tempo and have the module determine the exact beats per minute (BPM). LEDs across the top of the module can be set to light up with the metronome in several patterns, thus giving you a visual as well as aural cue. For the sake of variety, eleven sounds can be assigned to the metronome output (including a human voice counting the time).

In what Roland calls "Coach Mode," you can set up four types of accu-

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Electronic Review

racy and timing exercises and six endurance and stamina exercises. These are a lot of fun to experiment with. For accuracy and timing, you can 1) set the metronome to play a warm-up pattern to follow along with, 2) check your timing through an LED display showing whether you are ahead of, behind, or right on the beat of the metronome, 3) have the metronome play eight bars at regular volume and then eight bars at a reduced volume so you can improve your internal timing, or 4) have the metronome automatically increase in speed by five BPM if you successfully play in time with the tempo for eight measures.

The endurance and stamina exercises have Gradual or Stepped modes. The Gradual mode accelerates or ritards the metronome beat in a gradual fashion from the current BPM setting. The Stepped mode moves the metronome tempo up or down by five BPM after eight measures. There is also a Timer mode that lets you set the amount of time that the metronome will play, from one to sixty minutes. This is somewhat like setting the timer on the treadmill at the gym.

The RM-2 module also has two inputs that can be used to attach additional electronic drum pads. This is useful for instructors, who can now conduct lessons quietly, with the student playing on one of the add-on pads. The inputs are also useful for snare drum or snare/tenor duets.

The module also contains an audio input that can be used to connect a CD or tape player, so that the music from the player is mixed in with the sound of the pad. This is very handy for use with CD/lesson-book combinations. It also means that you can use a portable CD player and practice anywhere you want to go.

A Swingin' Pad

The feel of a practice pad is the key to whether or not a drummer will actually use it. For years, the quest has been to make a pad that feels as much like an acoustic drum as possible. More recently, making the pad quiet has also been a factor. The V-Practice Pad employs a double-thickness mesh head manufactured for Roland by Remo. This head makes the pad feel more like an acoustic drum than other practice pads that are based on rubber playing surfaces. On its own, it's incredibly quiet. But

It takes an American original to play one.

Don Brewer
Grand Funk Railroad

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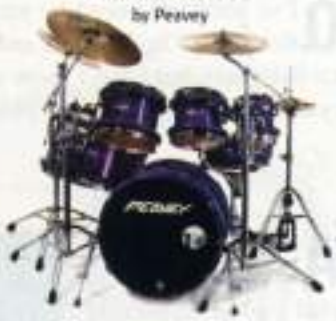
by Peavey



It's no secret that the legendary Don Brewer has an influential sound. The opening of "We're An American Band" is standard reference for most drummers. In searching for a kit to complement his distinctive style, he knew one thing – he wanted it to be extraordinary. That's why he plays RadialPro drums, made in the USA by Peavey. Our patented radial bridge design removes tuning and mounting hardware stresses from the drum's shell. That allows them to be extremely thin, so they can resonate freely like the soundboard on a violin. So they not only look distinctive, they also have a deep, resonant tone that sets them apart from conventional drums. It's exactly the kind of edge Don was looking for.

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Electronic Review

when you factor in the twenty-eight acoustic drum and percussion sounds produced by the Rhythm Coach module, you have a versatile practice pad that's loads of fun to play.

Bear in mind that the mesh head will need to be tensioned prior to first use. Roland likes to ship their drum products with the head slack so as to minimize stretching of the heads prior to purchase.

One of the accessories available for the RPM-1 is the PDS-2 Pad Stand. This is a stand with a threaded mount that mates to an insert point on the bottom of the V-Practice Pad and holds the pad in a similar position to a snare drum on a stand. A regular snare drum stand might work for this, but the basket will need to be able to close to a diameter of $10\frac{1}{2}$". (Many snare stands won't clamp anything less than a 12" drum.) The RPM-1 works well enough as a table-top device, but to get the proper positioning for correct drumming ergonomics, the stand will be a welcome addition to your equipment arsenal.

Life expectancy for the four AA alkaline batteries supplied with the RPM-1 is about ten hours. While frequent requests for more batteries might be one way of proving to your parents or spouse that you're actually using the device, a better option is to purchase a BOSS PSA-series AC adapter.

Bottom Line

For the drummer who practices a lot (as we all should), the Rhythm Coach Pack is a helpful, low-noise alternative to loud acoustic drums or unrealistic-feeling practice pads. It's priced lower than the cost of many "student" snare drums, yet it provides rehearsal tools not found on some more expensive electronic drumkits. The device is small enough to fit into a backpack or a gig bag, making it a perfect companion for after-school practice or pre-gig warm-ups.

THE NUMBERS

RPM-1 ..... **$249**
(Comes complete with RM-2 Rhythm Coach module, RP-2 V-Practice Pad, patch cable, batteries, drumkey, and owner's manual)
PDS-2 Pad Stand **$59**
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Mike Bord

Ozzy's Master of M

Story by Waleed Rashidi
Photos by Ross Halfin/Idols

"It was beyond belief when we found out we were playing for the Queen of England," Mike Bordin gushes about his latest gig with the hugely popular Ozzy Osbourne. Even though our conversation takes place over the phone, one can just picture Bordin's eyes lighting up, gazing in disbelief, lost in amazement.

And "amazing" just about describes Bordin's healthy career as a highly sought-after rock drummer. Through two decades of touring and recording experience in various name-brand rock acts, including Faith No More, Korn, Jerry Cantrell (of Alice In Chains fame), and most recently Ozzy Osbourne, the lively and talkative dreadlocked super-slammer still appears bewildered by the accelerating caliber of gigs and challenges thrown his way. And perhaps it's that constant sense of enthusiasm that keeps Bordin fresh and wide-eyed yet humble and honest, as both a fiery, eager performer and as a respectful, sensitive personality.

Although Bordin started playing drums with the late Metallica bassist Cliff Burton, he got his first serious career launch in 1982 with the Bay Area–based Faith No More. FNM was an eclectic rock act whose hits like "Epic" and "Falling To Pieces" proved that any selection of genres—from metal to rap to opera—could be melded into a three-minute hit single. It was in Faith No More where Bordin was able to make his mistakes, fall and fumble, develop his style, and eventually polish and nurture himself into a finely tuned rhythm machine.

in
Metal

"Ozzy's personality is so huge. He's larger than life.

"As soon as we got our chance to tour—and starve on tour—

we were there," Bordin says of his first opportunity to label himself a professional musician with Faith No More. "It was better than starving at home!"

That same burning sensation in the belly of Bordin soon shifted from starvation to an internal flame of motivation, a drive and persistence that led the drummer to gain acceptance because of his inventive, distinctive performances in Faith No More. He was soon touring worldwide, sharing the bill with top names, and gaining the respect of his peers and even his idols, such as Ozzy Osbourne.

Bordin's easily recognizable style includes a set of unique performance characteristics—riding with the left hand yet kicking with the right foot, placing the rack toms up high and flat, positioning his throne rather loftily. But more importantly, Bordin is easily recognized by his sound: his steady, deliberate rock drive, dense knowledge of various styles and rhythms, and prevailing tendency to shoehorn himself into just about any musical situation presented to him. "It's always good to know French cooking," Bordin half-jokes. "But you've still gotta know how to make grits and gravy."

With that sliver of advice, Bordin's percussive culinary skills were put to the ultimate taste test when he was offered the chance-of-a-lifetime gig—joining Ozzy Osbourne's ensemble (with guitarist Zakk Wylde and bassist Robert Trujillo) both in Black Sabbath and on Ozzy's solo gig, on stage and in the studio. So, maintaining Bordin's preference for catchy, poignant euphemisms, let's just say that he's baked one hell of a turkey with his latest endeavors.

Ultimate Din

Drums: Yamaha Birch Custom Absolute
A. 6½x14 maple snare (or 7x13 Akira Jimbo maple or 6x14 bell brass)
B. 12x14 tom
C. 13x15 tom
D. 16x18 floor tom
E. 18x24 kick

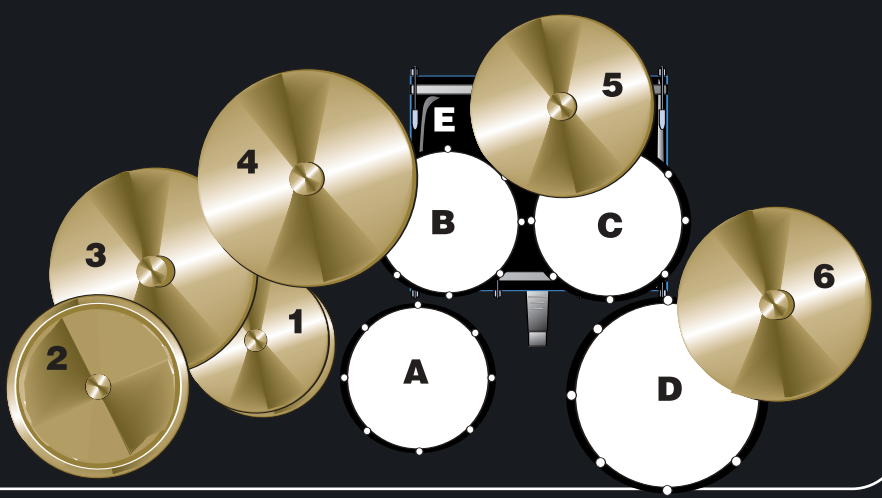
Cymbals: Zildjian
1. 15" A New Beat Rock hi-hats (brilliant)
2. 19" K China
3. 21" A Sweet ride (brilliant)
4. 22" Z Ping ride (brilliant)
5. 19" K Dark medium-thin crash
6. 20" A medium crash (brilliant)

Hardware: Yamaha stands, DW 5000 Delta II bass drum pedal with strap drive (maximum spring tension)

Heads: Remo coated CS Emperor on snare batter with Ambassador snare-side head (tuned tight with no muffling), coated Emperors on tops of toms with clear Ambassadors on bottoms (no muffling), clear PowerStroke 3 on bass drum batter with Ebony Ambassador on front (tuned low, minimal muffling)

Sticks: Vic Firth American Classic Rock model (hickory with wood tip)

Microphones: Shure Beta 52, 56, 91, 98, SM81, KSM32



MD: Is it still surreal to be working with Ozzy?

Mike: To me it's never been surreal, because I always look him in the eyes. And we got to know each other pretty well as people before we played together. He jammed with Faith No More, and that's how we met. He liked "The Real Thing" and "Epic." He'd come down and jam with us on "War Pigs." And after the shows we did, he and I would talk. I'm just a huge Sabbath fan, probably the hugest fan on the planet. That band was *so* important. I told Ozzy that when I first met him, and we connected right away.

MD: So have you found it easy working with Ozzy?

Mike: I don't know if "easy" is the right word. It's also not that difficult. It's unique. It's not like playing in Faith No More, it's not like filling in for David Silveria in Korn, it's not like playing with Jerry Cantrell. Ozzy is a unique individual. He is totally himself.

MD: What are certain aspects of the gig that differentiate it from the others you've played?

Mike: His persona—him! That's Ozzy! His personality is so huge. He's larger than life. It's an awesome thing to see and feel on stage, it's an awesome thing to be part of that and feel that. It's insane. Plus the music is so strong. We're talkin' classic songs that have defined many different eras of rock.

MD: Did you find it difficult to adapt to a new environment, working with a new set of rules that you had to play by?

Mike: Well, you've gotta learn 'em. That's the thing—you've got to figure out what you're doing and what you need to do. You have to be appropriate for the situation. That's been a huge part of my learning process, since now I'm not in a band that I started. I've not been one of the five hands on the control stick. I'm trying to bring the best out of what these other people are trying to do. It's been a huge education.

I have to say that I feel a lot of my learning started when I stopped playing in Faith No More. Since that was "my" band, and I started it, it was safer. I had more control and I could do whatever the hell I wanted. With Ozzy, my job, and I'm hugely proud

of it, is to play his music so he can sing his best. From there, I put my stamp on it and do my thing. But I have to remember that I'm a support player. I need to get into the music and support it properly.

MD: Was there anything in the Ozzy gig that you weren't prepared for?

Mike: The thing that I thought was really interesting going in was learning the classic tunes, and then finding out that Ozzy's approach to them had changed. I remember him saying, "Well, we don't do it like that anymore. We do it like this." I realized that over the years of working with different drummers, those tunes—and Ozzy—had evolved. That was very interesting to me.

I came into this situation from the very start with a huge amount of respect for the music, the person who made it, and the people who like it, because this music is important to a lot of people. I felt good about it and I think I've been careful with trying to play the music the way it's supposed to be played. You could compare the music to a classic car. Classic cars have their own pluses and minuses. They don't have good safety belts and maybe some of the parts are more fragile. But by and large they're way more beautiful and have much more character than anything these days. You take it for what it is, and you've gotta respect it.

MD: Why do you think you were selected for Ozzy?

Mike: As I said, I was the hugest Sabbath fan, and Ozzy knew it. We talked about my doing the gig several times, and I think it got to a point where he really wanted to give me a shot, and it just happened. I was stoked.

MD: How well-versed were you with the material?

Mike: I knew the Sabbath material backwards and forwards, one hundred percent, in my sleep.

MD: What about the Ozzy material?

Mike: My wife and I went to Hawaii—I have a big thing about volcanoes. We went to the big island and to the volcanoes, and we hiked around, which was great. While doing that I listened to all of Ozzy's stuff non-stop. When I came back, I started rehearsals with the band, and it felt good.

MD: What kinds of changes did you make to your kit to accommodate the Ozzy gig?

Mike: Well, by that time my tech had talked me out of using my 26" kick drum. My setup had been a 26", with 13x15 and 14x16 rack toms positioned dead flat like a table-top. It was an old-style kick drum, a 14x26, an old first-wave, brown, late '70s Yamaha drum. I loved that drum, but it did place the toms up high. My tech talked me into trying an 18x24, and I'm glad I did. It has an amazingly deep pitch, and the thump is insane. The soundman was happi-

Korn was like driving some crazy racing Ferrari."

er with the slightly smaller drum. And I have to admit that I like sitting behind it as opposed to the 26".

Most of the gigs I play I basically use the same kit. With Korn, David [Silveria] had a lot of electronics that I had to get used to. But other than that, the only thing that has sort of evolved on my kit is the size of the cymbals. Some of them have gotten bigger. I've also gone through tons and tons of different snare drums. But as for the rest of the drums, no, they've been the same. It's a Yamaha 9000 kit, with 12x14 and 13x15 toms, and a 16x18 floor tom.

As for cymbals, Zildjian stopped making the 15" Rock hats I liked, so I tried to get my hands on every single pair I could before they were gone. I mostly play them with my foot, and they really cut through. That was a big thing for me, and I wish Zildjian would start making them again. It's kind of a bummer.

We have a guy here in LA who put a different bearing edge on the drums. These are very big drums, and there's no muffling on them whatsoever—no tape, no Moon Gels. They're wide open. Those Yamaha birch drums sound so good, especially over time. I've had my kit for over nine years now, and they're unbelievable. But the reason I had the bearing edges recut is because I get more sound out of the drum faster. With such an enormous drum, I think the tendency is for the sound to be very slow to get out of the drum, and therefore not be defined. Now the drums speak faster and louder.

As for snare drums, I really like the Akira Jimbo model. It's a 7x13 drum that when tuned up sounds like a friggin' handgun. After seeing Akira play, I don't think my style of playing was what it was meant for, but I like the sound.

The snare drum I'm using mostly on stage now is a pipe brass model that Bill Detamore from Pork Pie made for me. I don't know what gauge the shell is, but it's corroded and nasty looking, and it sounds great. I also use a chrome-over-brass Yamaha on some of the new stuff. I really fell in love with the Roy Haynes model—the $5\frac{1}{2}$x14 hand-hammered copper snare drum. It has an internal, screw-drive muffle. I was using that drum for the Korn tour. To me, that drum sounded like the perfect combination of a Black Beauty and a wood drum. I still use it in the studio.

MD: Speaking of Korn, how long did you do that gig?

Mike: Ninety shows. They did about a dozen shows of that tour, and then David had his hand troubles. So I had to learn seventeen songs—or at least know them well enough to fake them—in two days. And that includes working out all the triggering and sampling.

Mike Bordin

MD: What was that gig all about?

Mike: I have endless respect for those guys, coming in as somebody who didn't really know anything about them. I'd seen some videos and heard this and that, but I wasn't really that interested. I was listening to anything *but* music in that vein. I felt like there were familiar aspects to it, but other things went in a totally different direction from anything I would ever have done in my band. It was a great learning experience. You know what? It kicked ass. The music worked.

MD: What about adapting to the electronics?

Mike: I hated that! [laughs]

MD: You're not much of an electronics guy?

Mike: No, man, I don't even own a computer! I just don't do that stuff. My tech and I would laugh and say, "What's the mark of a great drum sample? The mark of a great drum sample is when somebody would say, 'That sounds just like a real drum!'" So I'll do you one better. I'll make my toms sound so great that you'll want to sample *them*. I understand why people use electronics, because there's a lot of stuff you physically can't do without them. Electronics open up a whole other world of creativity.

MD: But you're not ready to play in that world yet?

Mike: I had a lot of fun with it. But I'm probably the only idiot in the world that could actually hit a trigger pad and not hit it right. [laughs] I'm still learning how to play drums. I'm not so sure I'm ready to learn how to play pads.

MD: Was it strange to play with a band that was influenced by Faith No More?

Mike: David said that's why he called me. It felt familiar in some ways, but they took it in a totally different direction that was refreshing and exciting. Playing in Faith No More was like driving a Model T Ford. Korn was like driving some crazy racing Ferrari.

I'm honored that other people were influenced by us. But people should take influences and do what they want with them. Who were we influenced by? Black Sabbath and Killing Joke! Nobody invented anything.

MD: Did you find it was easy learning David's parts?

Mike: The first run of dates for me was

MIKE BORDIN

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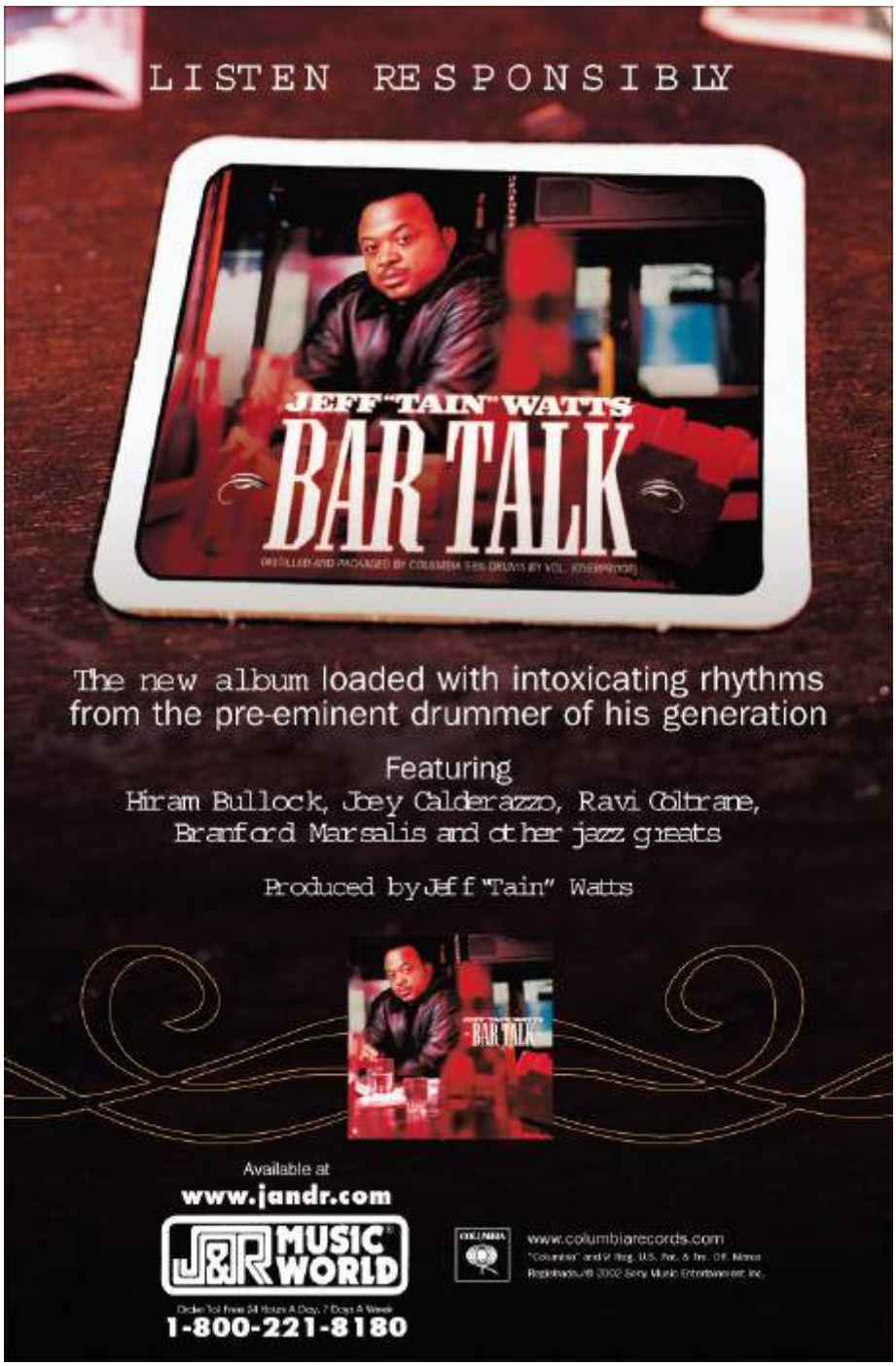


Mike Bordin

about learning the parts. The second run of dates was about trying to feel the parts. The third run of dates was trying to give back my impression or version of the parts. Stage one is like physically memorizing, two is becoming comfortable, and three is working with them. And that took a long time.

MD: Locking in with Korn and Ozzy's grooves, how do you play so hard?

Mike: I don't know. But I do know that I don't play as hard as I used to. I'm getting old.

MD: You beat the hell out of your drums, man. You know you do!

Mike: I knock black dots off heads, break footplates on pedals, snap hoops…. And frankly, I think drums sound better that way. I've always wanted to play hard and solid, but not stiff. I've always wanted to maintain a nice, natural feel. And besides, it feels good to beat the shit out of your drums.

MD: Who inspired you to play this way?

Mike: Bill Ward with Sabbath, and John Bonham with Zeppelin. I also liked the aggression of punk rock, like Black Flag and The Sex Pistols.

MD: Why did you start playing ride rhythms with your left hand?

Mike: That was an experiment. I'm left-handed. I studied drumming with a teacher who basically said, "You like metal music. That's what you want to play. You don't want to become a jazz guy. So why should I force you to cross your right hand over your left and turn you around?" The point of the experiment was not just to be strong with my left hand, but to learn and take elements of being a righty, and strengthen *both* sides. I do feel that this approach works really well for playing hard.

MD: You mentioned earlier that you're getting older. Have you encountered any injuries due to your hard playing style?

Mike: I don't even want to talk about it—I'm good. I mean, do I hit myself on the head regularly? Do I break open my fingers? Do I have scars all over my hands? Yes. But I don't have any permanent damage, thank you, except for my hearing.

MD: What's going on with your hearing?

Mike: I've been wearing protection since FNM wrote "The Real Thing," which was in 1988. I won't go to a show or do anything without it. But honestly, as a drummer who plays hard and who has done it

for a long time, you know, your hearing is going to be affected no matter what steps you take to protect your ears. I know my left ear, being on the side where the hi-hat, China, and ride cymbals are, isn't as strong as my right.

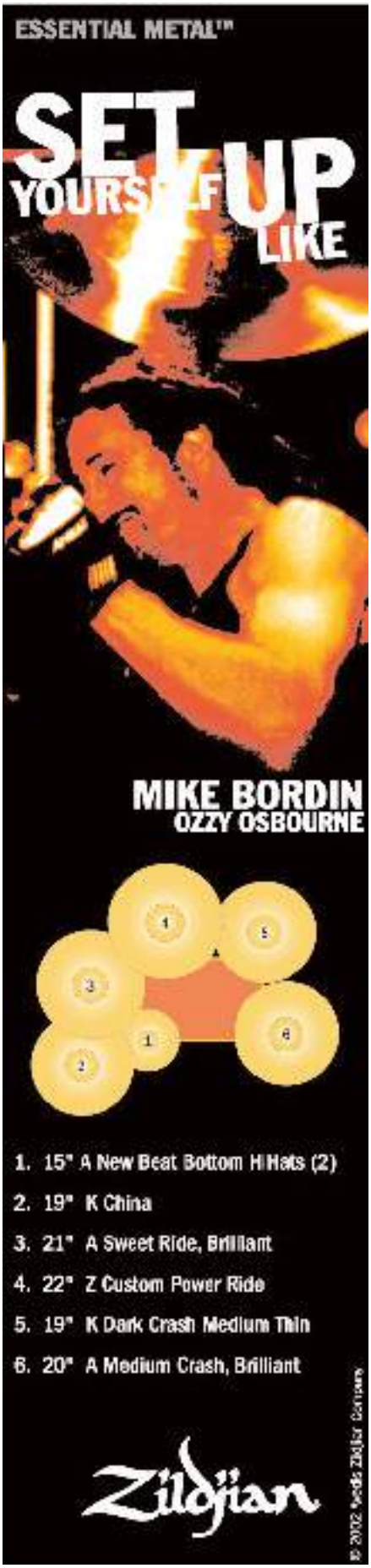
MD: I'd also like to ask you about how high you sit. You're up there.

Mike: I'm a little guy. I've got to use what I've got, I've gotta use gravity. I sit high enough to where I can hit both hands on the snare at the same time with the butts of my sticks and it feels comfortable.

MD: And what about those flat toms?

Mike: It's part of how I was taught, and that was to make sure you let your fingers collect the stick rather than leave it on the head. It's like if you were to play any sort of a hand drum. When you hit the drum with your palm on the edge, the sound goes "doooooom." If you leave your hand on the head, it goes "doh." It's the same thing with the stick. You need to get the stick off of the head. Once you hit it, you've got to take it away.

MD: You mentioned earlier about how



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Faithful Tracks

These are the recordings that Mike says best represent his playing.

Artist	Recording
Ozzy Osbourne	Down To Earth
Faith No More	Angel Dust
Faith No More	Album Of The Year
Faith No More	The Real Thing
Jerry Cantrell	Degradation Trip

And these are the ones he listens to for inspiration.

Artist	Recording	Drummer
Marty Robbins	complete recordings	
Tony Williams	Believe It!	Tony Williams
Art Blakey	Orgy In Rhythm (Vol. 1-2)	Art Blakey, Art Taylor, Jo Jones, Specs Wright
Rage Against The Machine	The Battle Of Los Angeles	Brad Wilk

you like to stomp your hats rather than putting a stick to them. Why's that?

Mike: In Faith No More, I didn't use a hi-hat on the first record. Well, maybe I played it with a stick on one part of one song. I just like to use the hats with my foot to mark time.

MD: Do you play a double pedal at all?

Mike: I started using two kick drums recently, when I was doing some re-tracking stuff for Ozzy. [Bordin recut some of the original drum parts for the reissues of *Blizzard Of Ozz* and *Diary Of A Madman*.] I've always prided myself on being able to do what I wanted with one foot. Triplets, four notes on the fly, and 16th notes are no problem. But there are some things now on this Ozzy tour where I use a double pedal, like for fast, sustained things—mostly the big rock endings. I've been comfortable doing what I need to do with one kick drum. But why not use two? If it's appropriate, then yeah, use two.

MD: Let's talk about one of your most recent releases, the phenomenal Jerry Cantrell record. For some reason it doesn't necessarily sound like you on the drums.

Mike: I felt really good about that. Jerry sent me the demo tapes—just a guitar in a jam box—and I was floored by the material. It was a labor of love to make that record. We tracked twenty-seven songs, two records worth of material. There's a song on there called "Solitude," which is one of my favorites. It's a deep, slow dance song. It's just beautiful.

MD: What were the sessions with Jerry like?

Mike: They were brutal. They were chaotic. Oh man, it was insane!

MD: In what way?

Mike: We weren't prepared. We had played together three times, but Jerry's songs are tricky. He doesn't write chugga-chugga songs that repeat. The forms of some of the songs are unique. But we wanted to get them right. It was hectic. But I loved the material, and I think we all believed in it. It's deep, honest, and dark as hell, but it's beautiful.

MD: Do you wish you had the chance to play that material with Cantrell live?

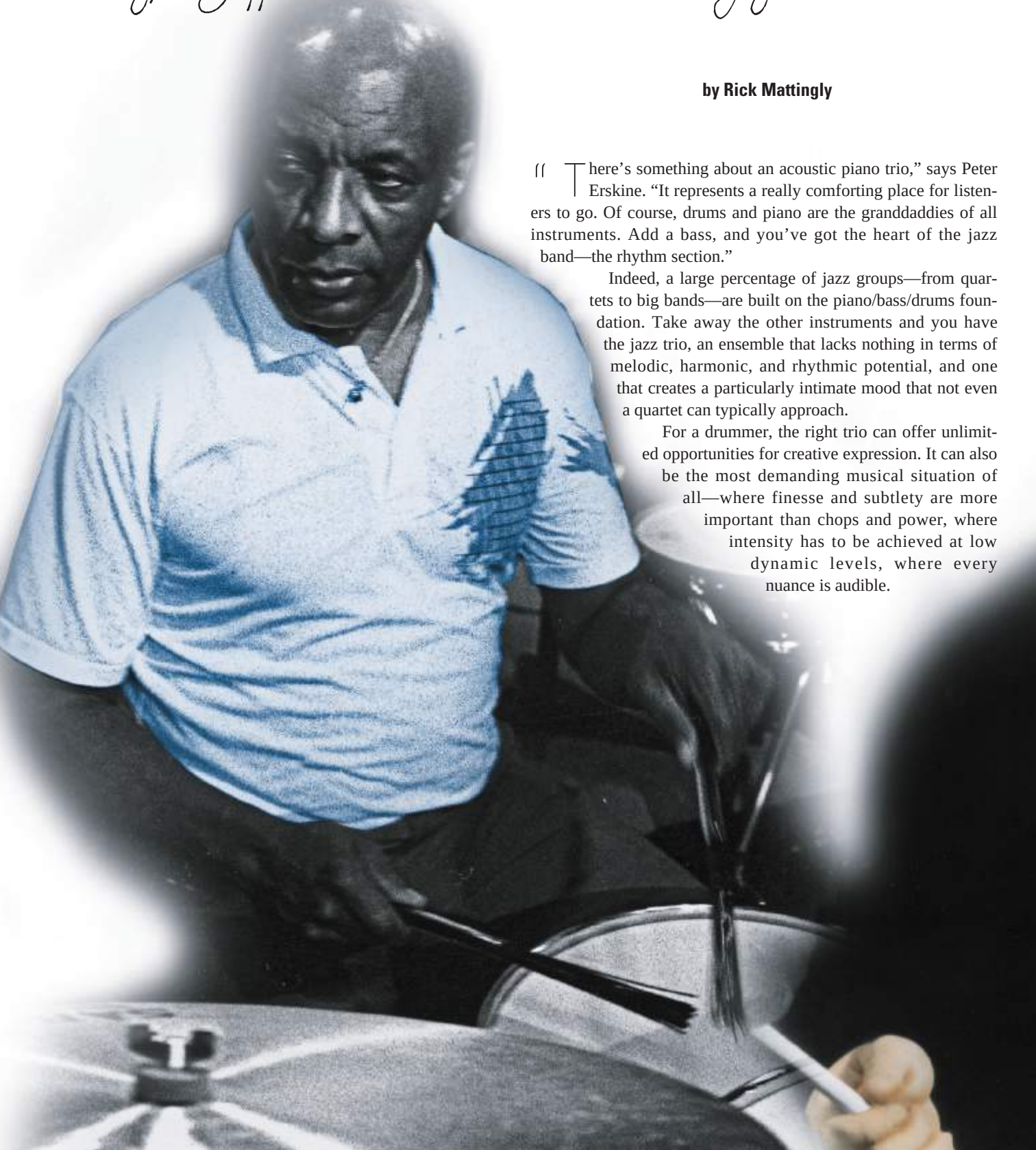
Mike: I'm sure it would have been fun. But I feel so hugely blessed to be part of this Ozzy thing, this roller-coaster circus. All the learning I've done, all the playing I've done, has gotten me to this point. I feel so fortunate. I'm totally ready to kill for Ozzy. The band is *smokin'*, and it feels incredible to be playing in it.

Sure, I'd love to play with Jerry at some point, absolutely. Did I love playing with Korn? Would I be honored or thrilled if they needed me again? Sure. But what am I doing right now? Ozzy. This gig came before all those other gigs, and I'm proud to say it's still going *after* all those gigs. And I guess the bottom line is, I feel like I'm really capable of laying it down for Ozzy the right way.

THREE ON

Ed Thigpen, Jeff Hamilton, And Peter Erskine On Playing In A Piano Trio

by Rick Mattingly



"There's something about an acoustic piano trio," says Peter Erskine. "It represents a really comforting place for listeners to go. Of course, drums and piano are the granddaddies of all instruments. Add a bass, and you've got the heart of the jazz band—the rhythm section."

Indeed, a large percentage of jazz groups—from quartets to big bands—are built on the piano/bass/drums foundation. Take away the other instruments and you have the jazz trio, an ensemble that lacks nothing in terms of melodic, harmonic, and rhythmic potential, and one that creates a particularly intimate mood that not even a quartet can typically approach.

For a drummer, the right trio can offer unlimited opportunities for creative expression. It can also be the most demanding musical situation of all—where finesse and subtlety are more important than chops and power, where intensity has to be achieved at low dynamic levels, where every nuance is audible.

THREE

"With a trio, you're naked," says Jeff Hamilton. "Everything is exposed and everything you do is heard by everyone. I really like that aspect of a trio."

Hamilton likes it so much, in fact, that he's been leading his own trio for many years. The current lineup includes pianist Tamir Hendelman and bassist Christoph Luty, who also work with the drummer as the rhythm section for the Clayton-Hamilton Jazz Orchestra, which Jeff co-leads.

Likewise, Peter Erskine has led his own trios. His original trio, which included pianist John Taylor and bassist Palle Danielsson, performed live only in Europe and recorded several albums on the ECM label. His current trio features pianist Alan Pasqua and bassist Dave Carpenter, and Peter considers this group to have provided him with the most satisfying musical experiences of his career.

Hamilton and Erskine both credit Ed Thigpen as an important influence through his pioneering work as a member of The Oscar Peterson Trio from 1959 to 1965. "Playing with that group put me on the international map," says Thigpen. "We did a lot of wonderful music, drawing from the great American composers."

Recently, all three drummers spoke to *Modern Drummer* about trio work. The first topic involved the power of playing softly.

"If you look at great speakers, they draw you into what they're saying by speaking quietly," Hamilton offered by way of analogy. "They know where they stand, and they get their feelings across without screaming at you. My favorite musicians have that mentality: knowing who they are, standing up for what they believe in, and just offering it to other people without shoving it in their faces. The idea is to lay your groove down softly and invite people into that groove."

"We live in a world that pays more attention to speed, volume, and flash. Subtlety has its own power in relation to that."

—PETER ERSKINE

"A trio is about three people all contributing to the beat and being responsible for the improvisation. The level of trust among the three members is vital."

—JEFF HAMILTON

"Jo Jones used to tell me, 'Make it sound as big as possible. Not loud, but big.'"

—ED THIGPEN

Thigpen says that Oscar Peterson often played softly to attract people's attention when a crowd was noisy. "If the people got loud, we played softer," Thigpen recalls. Hamilton remembers doing the same thing when he worked with The Ray Brown Trio. "We would decrescendo until we were down to a whisper, and the people who were talking loudly were left out to dry," he says, laughing. "They would usually get the message and shut up and listen. Instead of trying to outscream them, which never works, you go the other way."

Erskine admits that learning to play softly was a challenge. "When I started playing professionally, it was all big band stuff with Stan Kenton and Maynard Ferguson," Peter recalls. "Sometimes we would do festivals and all the bands would be at the same hotel. Jam sessions would happen and I would hear drummers like Ed Soph or Joe La Barbera, who were in other big bands at the time. I was envious of the way those guys could play with a really light touch, because I was very heavy-handed."

When Erskine moved to L.A. to join Weather Report, he also started working with The George Cables Trio. "I approached George's group with the piano-trio influences I had, which consisted of a little bit of Oscar Peterson and Ramsey Lewis. In my limited experience at the time, I only heard the more obvious trappings of it and the traditional way the drums accompanied the piano and bass.

"But I was very impressed with a Steve Kuhn recording called *October Suite*, with Marty Morell on drums and Ron Carter on bass. That gave me a glimpse into the different possibilities of piano trio playing. The Bill Evans Trio with Paul Motian on drums also became a model of piano-trio playing."

But Peter says that playing with guitarist John Abercrombie best

prepared him for the type of trio playing he does now. "Playing with Abercrombie got me away from the left hand of the piano, which seemed to lock me into that sideman type of approach," he explains. "With John I was able to let go of my muscle-bound drumming habits and learn to listen better and play over the form in a more musical way."

Soon afterward, when Erskine formed his ECM trio, playing softly was one of his goals, and that philosophy continues in his current group. "I want to play so softly at times that people have to sit on the edge of their seats to listen," he says. "We live in a world that pays more attention to speed, volume, and flash. Subtlety has its own power in relation to that. One is not more valid than the other; they just satisfy different hungers.

"My own musical hunger has found nourishment in expressing musical ideas in a way that doesn't assault the listener. We're not screaming at you; we're inviting you in. And when we do play a hefty accent, it's all the more meaningful because everyone's ears can appreciate the shift in dynamics."

But Erskine has problems on occasion achieving his goal. "As soon as you get soft, a lot of sound guys will immediately crank up the volume," he says in a tone of voice that reflects both frustration and anger. "But if you can keep the music soft, people seem profoundly grateful for this chance to get into a musical place and escape from all the crazy stuff that constantly assaults our senses in today's world."

Thigpen says that even though you're not playing loud, a drummer still has to be able to play with intensity. "Intensity means *intent*," Ed says. "It's a matter of dynamic control and being focused. You really have to concentrate, but without tightening up. It's a matter of being totally in the present."

For many, it's easy to play with intensity in a big band setting or with an amplified group. But playing with intensity at low volume in a trio setting can be a difficult concept to grasp.

"It's hard to do," Hamilton admits, "and that's why a lot of people shy away from it. They don't want to take the time to learn how to get intensity by just whispering. Many people confuse intensity with volume, but there are a whole lot of people out there playing loud with no intensity in their beat. They're just *loud*.

"Intensity was one of the things that grabbed me about The Oscar Peterson Trio," Hamilton says. "Oscar and Ray Brown played with such intensity that Ed must have felt like he was facing a steamroller when he joined the group. Ed brought a subtlety to the group in volume, but he had all that intensity in the beat. That was something he showed us that we all should be doing."

Several years later, Hamilton got a chance to experience that intensity firsthand. "In 1990 I got to play with Ray Brown and Oscar Peterson together at the Hollywood Bowl," he recalls. "I had played before with Ray's trio, so I thought I knew what intensity was about. But when we hit the bandstand, Ray and Oscar were both groaning like we were in a weight-training room. I tend to groan a little when I play, too, but these guys were practically hollering. So I thought, 'Man, I'd better get the quarter note a little hotter.' It wasn't an up tempo; it was just that the intensity of the beat was so high that if I didn't jump on it I was going to be left in the dust. And by the end of the first tune, I was worn out!"

Hamilton says that intensity involves mental concentration. "Just focus on where you want to hit the cymbal, tap it, and invite people in. And a little groaning helps," he adds, laughing, "because the intensity comes from inside. Intensity is not a physical thing. Intensity comes from the way you're thinking about the beat."

Some drummers contend that one is automatically freer in a trio setting than in a larger ensemble. Hamilton is quick to disagree. "It all has to do with the quality of the musicians," he insists. "If I'm playing with bad musicians in a big band, then yeah, I've just got to hold it together and I feel restricted. But I've played with trios where nobody is locking in with anybody, and everybody is hearing something different as far as where the beat is. And so I feel like I'm handcuffed and I'm just being paid to hold the damn thing together.

"A trio is about three people all contributing to the beat and being responsible for the improvisation. The level of trust among the three members is vital. The players need to feel that they can go in any direction and the other two will be there to make sure that no

Recommended Trio Listening

Peter Erskine
- *Badlands*, Peter Erskine, Alan Pasqua, Dave Carpenter
- *Live At Rocco*, Peter Erskine, Alan Pasqua, Dave Carpenter
- *You Never Know*, Peter Erskine, John Taylor, Palle Danielsson

Jeff Hamilton
- *Hamilton House*, Jeff Hamilton Trio, with Larry Fuller, Lynn Seaton
- *Summer Wind: Live At The Loa*, Ray Brown Trio, with Jeff Hamilton, Gene Harris
- *Live! Montreux Alexander*, Monty Alexander Trio, with Jeff Hamilton, John Clayton

Ed Thigpen
- *West Side Story*, Oscar Peterson Trio, with Ed Thigpen, Ray Brown
- *The Cole Porter Songbook*, Oscar Peterson Trio, with Ed Thigpen, Ray Brown
- *It's Entertainment*, Ed Thigpen, with Carsten Dahl, Jesper Bodilsen

Some Classic Trio Recordings To Check Out

At The Pershing—But Not For Me, Ahmad Jamal Trio with **Vernel Fournier**, Israel Crosby

Waltz For Debbie, Bill Evans Trio with **Paul Motian**, Scott LaFaro

Paris Concert, Bill Evans Trio with **Joe La Barbera**, Marc Johnson

Now He Sings, Now He Sobs, Chick Corea, with Miroslav Vitous, **Roy Haynes**

Song Of Singing, Circle: Chick Corea, Dave Holland, **Barry Altschul**

Standards Live, Keith Jarrett, Gary Peacock, **Jack DeJohnette**

Trident, McCoy Tyner, with Ron Carter, **Elvin Jones**

Love For Sale, Great Jazz Trio: Hank Jones, Buster Williams, **Tony Williams**

one falls on the floor. By having that trust, everyone is freer to try things.

"But the same is true in a big band. It's all sixteen or eighteen people contributing and being aware of the time. When I'm playing with great musicians in a big band, I sometimes play looser in that setting than I do in a trio. Again, that trust is there and the band knows I'm not going to drop them on their heads."

Hamilton also disputes the claim that all trio playing is done at low volume. "It depends on what trio you're playing with," Jeff says. "Ray Brown had some *hollerin'* shout choruses, and he would want me to play louder than I would ever think to play with some of the big bands I've worked with. Some of his music required the drummer to clobber it and climb all over the fills and play like you're playing in a big band. And you know what? It did sound like a big band. Everybody had a huge sound in that trio. So you've got to serve the music."

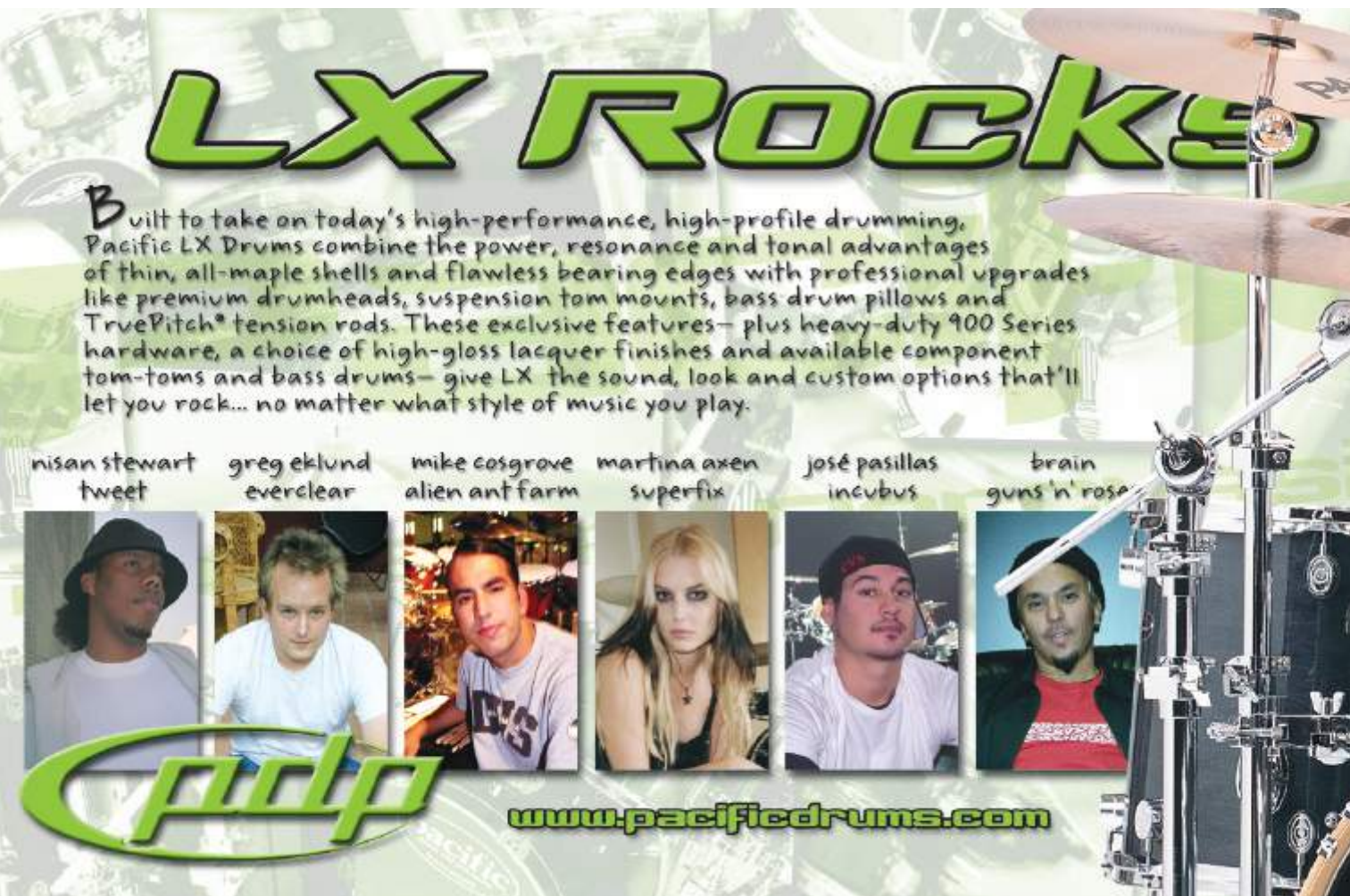
Thigpen sees more similarities than differences between trios and larger groups. "In the accompaniment role, it doesn't matter if it's a big band or a small group," Ed says. "The basic principles are still time and form, but you need to make it sound a little bigger in a trio so that it will sound like a larger group.

"Jo Jones used to tell me, 'Make it sound as big as possible. Not loud, but big,'" Ed recalls. "That means you let the instrument sing. Each drum has its own tonal range and its own overtones. You have to tune the drums to make the most of their sound. And you have to learn to *play* the instrument; don't beat it. You will choke a cymbal or drum by beating it.

"I try to simulate orchestral sounds," Ed explains. "Turning the snares off when I'm playing brushes to get a more harmonic sound coming through the open snare drum. Using the hi-hat independently. Shading with the cymbals, using glissandos and swells and all the orchestral effects. Before I joined Oscar, he didn't have a drummer; he had Herb Ellis on guitar. So I used to try to emulate that strumming guitar sound with the drums.

From left: Alan Pasqua, Dave Carpenter, and Peter Erskine

"I was still playing 'the drummer's role,' but I was using the drumset as a percussion instrument," Ed says. "Max Roach calls the drumset the 'multiple percussion instrument,' and that's especially true in a trio setting. You have to use the full range of tools so you can make one cymbal sound like five. Besides sticks and brushes, I carry medium Saul Goodman timpani mallets,



and I've seen Jack DeJohnette use marimba mallets. It's a matter of personal taste, but the main thing is to blend."

Although some players advocate using smaller drums in a smaller group, Hamilton uses the same drums and cymbals for trio work that he uses for big band playing, with the exception of the bass drum. "I use a 20" bass drum for big band and an 18" bass drum with the trio," he explains. "But other than that, everything is the same: a Remo Acousticon 5x14 snare drum, an 8x12 mounted tom, and a 14x14 floor tom. Cymbals are all thin Bosphorous Hammers: 14" hi-hats, a 20" on the left, a 22" on the right with three rivets, and a new 22" Hammer China."

Erskine uses the same cymbals for trio work that he uses for other settings. "But I think the cymbals sound their best in the trio setting," Peter says. "I'm using three 22" Zildjian cymbals: a K Constantinople, a prototype cymbal I'm working on with Zildjian that is unlathed and has three rivets, and a Swish Knocker. It's wild to use three 22" cymbals in a piano trio, but they give me a full range of color, tone, and sound. I also have an 18" K crash and 14" K hi-hats."

Lately, Erskine has been using a Yamaha HipGig Jr. kit with his trio, both in live settings and on the group's most recent recording, *Badlands*. "It's a little four-piece kit with a 16" bass drum. It's one less tom than I usually use, and I like the focus it brings to my choices. By restricting your choices you expand your imagination.

"I like changing kits for the setting," Erskine comments. "An important thing to remember is that you have to adjust to the venue, because the room becomes part of the sound of your instrument. A timpanist in a symphony orchestra is always changing mallets for different repertoire and different concert halls, and drummers should also make adjustments to fit particular situations."

Thigpen says that you also have to adjust to the musicians you're playing with. "If you have some background, you can tell who someone's influences are, and then you know what to bring to the table because you've done your homework and listened to all of the greats who have played with trios. What did Elvin bring to a trio? What did Roy Haynes bring? Listening to all these people and having experience playing with different people gives you a wealth of things to draw upon."

Hamilton recalls a particularly moving experience listening to a drummer who was not generally known for trio playing. "One night, Buddy Rich was in L.A. to do *The Tonight Show*," Jeff explains. "A guy named Alan Goodman had a club in L.A. called Mulberry Street, and he was friends with Buddy. *The Tonight Show* was taped

Press shot of Ed Thigpen, Ray Brown, and Oscar Peterson

at 5:30 in the afternoon, and after the show Buddy had the night off. So Alan invited Buddy to come out to the club. He said it wouldn't be a big deal with the public. Alan would invite some of his musician friends, Buddy could invite whomever he wanted, and it would be a relaxing hang. Chuck Domanico would be playing bass, Roger Kellaway would be on piano, and there would be a drumset there if Buddy wanted to play.

"So Buddy accepted and Alan invited Shelly Manne, John Guerin, and me to sit at the front table with him, because we had all played at Alan's club a lot and were friends. Roger and Chuck started playing, and here comes Buddy. He sat down behind the drums and started to go into his 'Buddy thing' with sticks on the hi-hat, and Roger and Chuck looked at him, like, '*C'mon*, let's get serious.'

"Buddy put down the sticks and played brushes the rest of the set. He was floating the hi-hat and dancing with the brushes. He had his head down and he wasn't mugging or showing off. He had a lot of space in his solos; he could have been playing with Bill Evans. I had tears in my eyes because I had never seen anything so beautiful—or so unexpected. It gave me so much insight into what Buddy Rich was about.

"We're the products of what we've listened to and what we've grown up with," Hamilton says. "You can hear everybody I've listened to when you hear my trio, but it's not just cut-and-paste. Your influences become part of your personality."

Jeff Hamilton, Tamir Hendelman, Christoph Luty

Hamilton readily acknowledges that his trio is more in the tradition of Oscar Peterson's group. "My introduction to jazz was through big band records," Jeff says. "Jazz trios were brought to my attention through a friend who turned me on to Oscar Peterson and Erroll Garner. The ensemble figures of Peterson's trio really grabbed my ear; it sounded like a small version of a big band. So for many years I played either in big bands or trios. Quintets and quartets didn't kill me the way big bands and trios did.

"I do own more Oscar Peterson Trio records than any other trio records," Hamilton continues. "It might surprise you to know that the second-most trio albums I have are by Bill Evans. I do enjoy playing light, floating brush playing, but I really love to lay the stick on the cymbal and have it swingin'. I think one reason some people are put off by jazz is that they can't follow what the musicians do sometimes. But in the early days of jazz, if people couldn't get up and dance to what you were playing, you didn't get the gig. So I think that a danceable beat is often missing in the music.

"I don't mean playing a jive Glenn Miller 'In The Mood' beat just to get people up to dance," Hamilton hastens to add. "I just mean that the beat itself has to dance and make people feel they can connect with it while they're listening to the music."

Thigpen agrees. "Over the years the job has changed and the drummer has a more integrated role," he says. "But some of the drummers seem to forget their foundation and then they wonder why it's not happening. You see, a lot of people don't realize that bebop came out of swing—at least they don't *play* like they know it. A lot of that swing element has been lost, and it makes a big difference in the feel."

Early in Thigpen's career, an important element in the swing feel was maintaining a steady pulse on the bass drum, and he became a master at "feathering" the bass drum in a trio setting. But as times changed, he adapted. "The bass drum pulse was

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important all through swing and early bebop," he explains. "But then a stylistic change came about and the bass drum was used more for punctuation. By this time, the basses were being miked and the bass players didn't need the reinforcement from the bass drum. So I had to learn how to *not* play the bass drum.

"Later on, when Tony Williams came in with the 4/4 on the hi-hat, I had to learn to do that. I remember seeing Tony and telling him, 'Guess what? I learned to play 4/4 on the hi-hat. Not as fast as you, but....' Tony just laughed and said, 'Keep going. You're going to make it.'"

Erskine's trio is more in the Bill Evans tradition, and so a primary goal for Peter in recent years has been to make the trio an equal partnership. "There's a wonderful quote I heard at a clinic presentation once that Bill Dobbins gave with his trio," Peter recalls. "They were talking about the Ahmad Jamal Trio, and I think it was Rich Thompson, the drummer, who said, 'In a trio, each guy doesn't give 100 percent. Each guy gives $33^1/_3$ percent.' You can argue the semantics of that, but I thought it was a nice way to look at it.

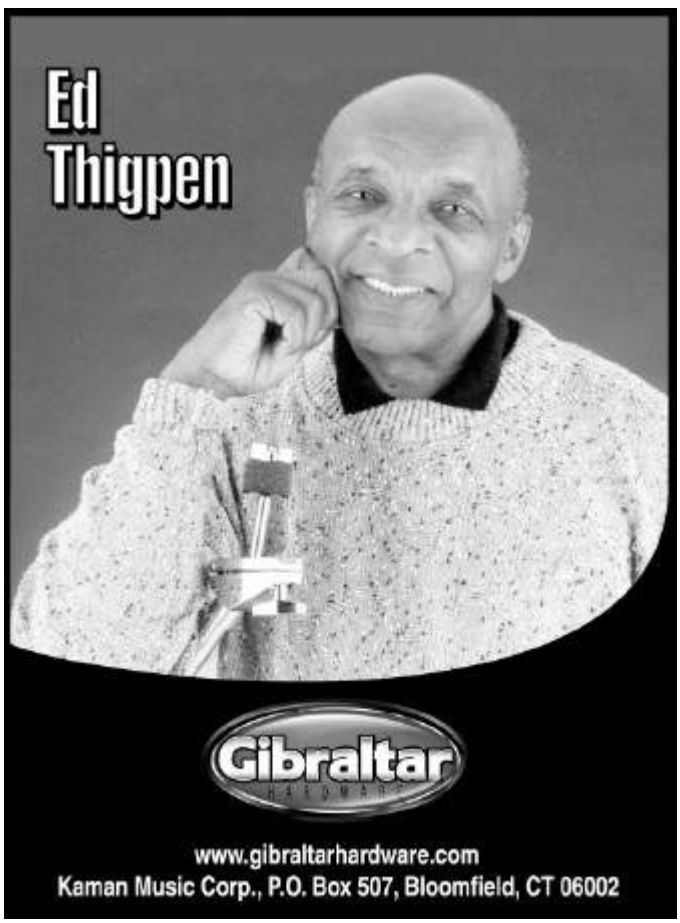
"In that respect," Peter explains, "I want everyone to treat solos as 'non-events' as opposed to the kind of solo where you're trying to knock the ball out of the ballpark. I don't want the music to be a series of home runs. The arc of each solo should fit within the framework of the entire piece. And the piece should fit within the framework of the entire evening of music.

"With many jazz groups, the tendency is to start the tune, then the bass player plays all the cool stuff he can play, the piano player plays all the cool stuff he can play, the drummer plays all the cool stuff he can play, and then they play the melody again and it's over. Nobody is listening to each other, and the density level is full from the get-go. There's no real interaction or communication. When you play a solo, you are supposed to be improvising, which means you are supposed to be composing. So I want everyone to be composing the same tune together."

Erskine says that trio playing, like all drumming, is ultimately about choices. "At a certain level, when you know how to swing and how to execute singles and doubles well enough around the kit that you can play any variety of patterns, then it comes down to, What beat are you going to play? Where are you going to place those various parts of the beat? What dynamic are you going to play?

"If you listen, almost all of the answers are automatic. If you're *not* listening, then it all becomes a conscious process. Or, even worse, you fall into the trap of playing for a response, and you play something that makes the audience give you a whoop and a holler, and you think, 'Hey, I'm onto something here.' And then you start playing the same boring crap a lot of other people are playing."

"Playing in a trio takes all the discipline you can muster," Thigpen says. "It takes a lot of instrumental technique and a lot of listening to different types of music. If you play the music as it should be played, and you play it with sincerity, then it comes across to people. If it needs to be soft, let it be soft. If it needs to be tender, give the feeling of tenderness. If it needs colors on the cymbal, use them. Just play music."



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Modern Drummer 2002 Festival Weekend

Saturday, May 18 and Sunday, May 19, 2002

Records, Records, Records

Story by T. Bruce Wittet • Photos by Alex Solca

Breaking records was the theme of this year's Modern Drummer Festival Weekend. For starters, the event sold out faster than ever before in its fifteen-year history. Indeed, the Memorial Auditorium of Montclair State University in Upper Montclair, New Jersey was packed to the rafters. To all those who couldn't score a ticket in the couple of months preceding the Festival: Hey, they weren't kidding about reserving in advance!

That's the news. Now the weather. Over *two hundred* weather-related records were broken this weekend, some dating back to the 1700s. Unseasonable cold, freezing rain, and even dollops of snow hit New Jersey, Pennsylvania, and New York. Of course, we don't need to tell *that* to the loyal "3:30 Club" (formerly The 5:30 Club) whose members lined up in the wee hours until the doors opened. Now these are *real* drum buffs.

Inside, we like to think we broke a few records of our own. Certainly Thomas Lang locked a few jaws permanently in the open position, as did Simon Phillips playing bebop jazz on an emerald green kit tuned way up. But we're getting ahead of ourselves. Let's slip inside those front doors before we get soaked.

Ron and Isabel Spagnardi welcomed the sell-out crowd to the festival.

Saturday, May 19

How do you warm a shivering crowd? You bathe them in the aura of **Richie Flores**, **Robby Ameen**, and **Rob Vilera**. Center stage, Flores, surrounded by congas, cajon, and bongos, was the heart of the ensemble. To his left, Vilera, with timbales, bells, and cymbals, was the heat. And Ameen, himself a Festival Weekend past attendee, was the pulse. He started with left-foot cowbell, graduating to Buddy Rich-style snare rolls and tom/double pedal interplay. His colleagues joined him, first for a slow-burning cha cha, then a samba. Flores wowed with great *glissandos* on congas; Vilera delivered furious exclamations on timbales. And then, mid-way through a clave groove, the sun poked its way through the clouds. Enough said.

Never lose the backbeat. Keep the pulse but don't dumb it down. These were among **John Blackwell**'s lessons. "The pocket is the cake," Prince's drummer told the crowd. "If I can put some icing on it, even better!" That icing included elevating his funk grooves with great arm flourishes. Each time John took aim at a crash, he swatted the thing, often with sticks twirling, perfectly timed to keep him honest. After performing a bit with The John Blackwell Matrix, a crack team that included Festival alumnus Tom Coster on keyboards, Bruce Bartlett on guitar, and Baron Browne on bass, John introduced one final player: John Kenneth Blackwell Senior. Playing a white marine pearl kit, the elder Blackwell took a solo. After his spot, John Sr. stood in the wings watching his son. "It's a great honor," he told us. "It was something I've always wanted to do—play here—but I never thought I'd get the chance. I used to make sure John read his *Modern Drummer* magazines." Amen.

Billy Ashbaugh, drummer for *NSYNC, sat way back on Bob Gatzen's DrumFrame and made us all vow never to dismiss a pop performer again. Playing solo and to a DAT of Gatzen's compositions, Billy displayed exquisite touch, intricate chops, and a funk groove that made you twitch. Speaking of *NSYNC, Billy treated us to a version of that band's "Digital Getdown," exhibiting how he made the track fluid with a double pedal and an X-Hat to keep the 16th notes ultra clean. A serious contender, who suggested some novel drumming uses for Tiger Balm ointment, Billy Ashbaugh earned substantial applause.

Tommy *freakin'* **Igoe**! We knew that *The Lion King* drummer could play, but did we know he'd melt the varnish off the hardwood stage? Phew! At one point, he descended down the toms blisteringly quick, peppering with his bass drum all the while, and a gasp arose, then applause—one of many spontaneous outbursts heard during Tommy's set. A traditional-grip player, he showed us that the ancient technique can be easily applied to a multi-tom set. Totally comfortable behind his kit, Tommy

Ron Spagnardi presents Sonny Igoe with an MD Editors Achievement Award.

Rab Zildjian accepted an Editors Achievement Award on behalf of his father, company chairman Armand Zildjian.

Drumming journalist and frequent MD author Burt Korall was also an Achievement Award recipient.

also enjoyed an easy rapport with the crowd when he explained various stickings; his "Three Secrets Of Flams" was a particular hit. So was Tommy's father, the legendary drummer/educator **Sonny Igoe**, who stepped up to receive an Editors Achievement Award from *MD* publisher Ron Spagnardi.

No one expected the new **Simon Phillips** and his band Vantage Point. Absent was the massive canary-yellow set with two kicks. In its place was a rich green lacquered kit with gold fittings: two racks, three floors (Tony Williams style), and massive 24" and 22" K Constantinoples. Appropriately, the repertoire was straight out of '60s Miles Davis. (Incidentally, Miles' nephew, drummer Vince Wilburn, was a festival guest.) Phillips showed himself tremendously sympathetic to soloists. Joined by Jeff Babko on keyboards, Dave Carpenter on bass, Brandon Fields on sax, and Walt Fowler on trumpet, Simon had his fans in disbelief. Maybe it was the ringing jazz-style tom rimshots or the Tony Williams-type flourishes incorporating lower toms and bass, but Saturday's headliner held the wild card.

Sunday, May 19

Imagine a jam at the **Reyes Family** home. That's pretty much the spirit that Walfredo Sr., Walfredo Jr., and Danny brought to the Festival. First up, the charismatic **Danny**, playing LP One Shot Shakers, looked out at the crowd and exclaimed, "How *cool* is this!" Then, sticks twirling, Danny explored congas, timbales, bells, and accent cymbals, and viciously assaulted a Chinese cymbal. At the far side of the stage, **Walfredo Jr**. made his entrance with a funky half-time fusion groove mixed with a *guaguanco*. No matter how complex Walfredo Jr. got, he always returned home to the backbeat, an approach that keeps him exciting—and steadily employed. For his solo, **Walfredo Sr**. worked the cajon, bongos, bells, and kit, occasionally punctuating with double bass. It was an understated, hip performance.

It's not that we're worlds apart in drumming, but **MD's International Showcase** reminded us that when the lights go out in one time zone, someone is awakening in another with frightening new ideas. Italy's **Furio Chirico**, for example, despite a start plagued by all the things that go wrong in drummers' nightmares—broken pedals, faulty DAT players, and the like—gave a riveting performance. One hundred percent committed to each note, fill, and accent, Furio performed to a DAT of Latin jazz and progressive rock styles lifted from his album, *Jazz Movie*.

Before he went on, **Thomas Lang**, a native of Austria now living in London, told us, "I'm not nervous, not at all." And then we saw why. When Thomas sat down at the throne…well…we're talking records again. Thomas displayed an incredible diversity of timbres. For example, 32nd notes on the rims of the drums followed by equally frantic flourishes on Jam Blocks with a Sonor Giant Step Twin Effect pedal. Thomas later remarked, "Anything you can do with your hands, you ought to be able to do with your feet." Hoots of approval interrupted his demonstrations, and it became clear that we've all got many miles to go before we sleep.

Although Megadeth's **Jimmy DeGrasso** played a little simpler than his predecessor, his attitude was positive, his confidence obvious, and his chops clean and flamboyant. A drummer with a winning demeanor, Jimmy endeared himself to the crowd when he confided that he once got fired from an L.A. band and had to struggle to keep the faith—either that or return to Bethlehem, Pennsylvania. Versatility is important, counseled Jimmy, but find a niche. The sound of Jimmy's combination maple shell/carbon fiber Pearl drums was distinctive—fat and loud with a quick decay. He played to a tape of Megadeth guitarist Al Petrelli's original compositions.

Billy Cobham, fusion pioneer with the Mahavishnu Orchestra and solo artist, received a standing ovation before he played a note. Brandishing two sticks in each hand, Billy played chords across the surface of his tightly tensioned Yamaha Oak Custom drums. Ever searching and restless, he took up musical phrases, developed them, then quickly abandoned them. Noise gates would have been out of the question: One moment Billy'd play at a whisper, next it was an airport runway. Bright, zany overtones rang out through the P.A., counterbalanced by plundering double kick.

It had been a while since headliners **Rick Marotta**, Will Lee, and Ross Bolton last played gigs together. And what a joyous celebration it was—even more so for surprise guest Tom Scott, who was celebrating a birthday. The band played a familiar repertoire, ranging from Lee's "If You Want To Boogie" to Stevie Wonder to Steely Dan, a band with which Marotta recorded several memorable tracks, including "Josie" and "Don't Take Me Alive." Marotta sat behind a tiny Yamaha HipGig kit that sounded plenty big through the P.A. Press rolls came out of nowhere in lieu of conventional fills, while Rick's delightful hi-hat work, sometimes sparse and syncopated, was in a class of its own. From the smiles on his bandmates' faces, you knew he was offering them a cushion-like groove. And for the finale, Lee and Bolton brought the house down when they sat down at HipGigs and grooved with Marotta.

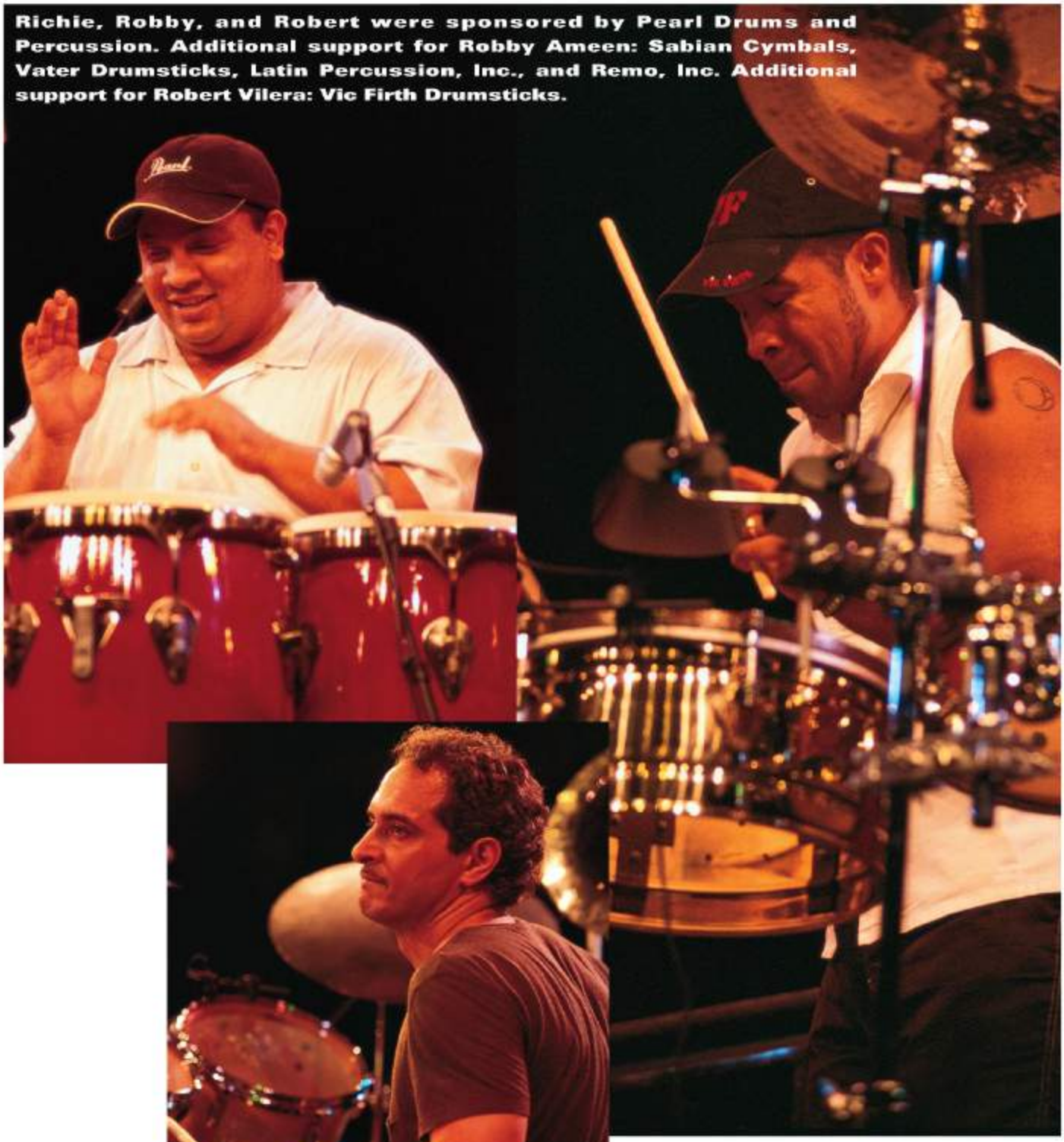
How to put it? You didn't *walk* through the exits: you *sauntered*. Outside there was no rainbow, but the rain was long gone and the temperature had warmed considerably. And in the end, that's what drumming is supposed to do.

Go to www.moderndrummer.com for more Festival coverage.

Richie Flores
Robby Ameen
Robert Vilera

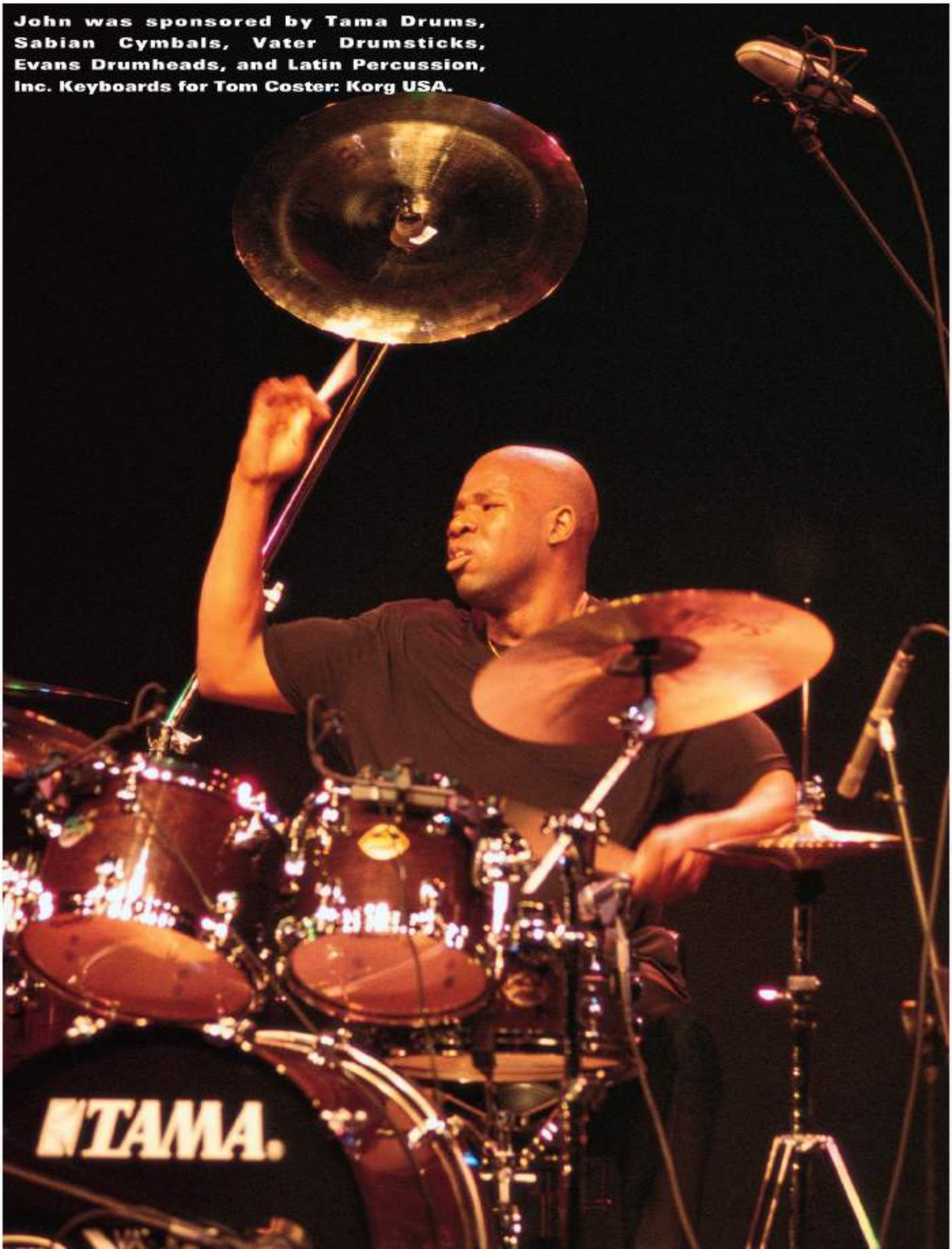
Modern Drummer 2002 Drum Festival Weekend

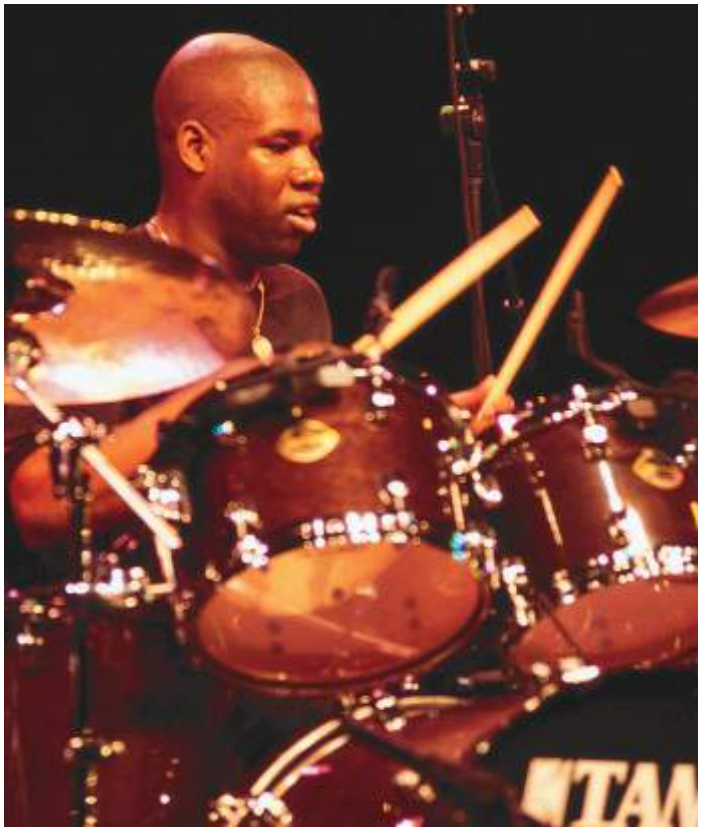
Richie, Robby, and Robert were sponsored by Pearl Drums and Percussion. Additional support for Robby Ameen: Sabian Cymbals, Vater Drumsticks, Latin Percussion, Inc., and Remo, Inc. Additional support for Robert Vilera: Vic Firth Drumsticks.

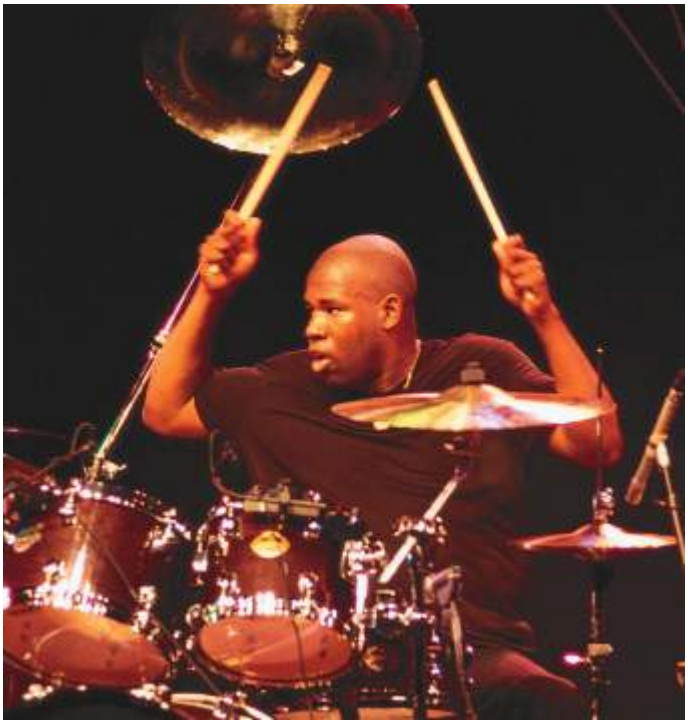


John Blackwell

Modern Drummer 2002 Drum Festival Weekend







The Blackwells, Senior and Junior

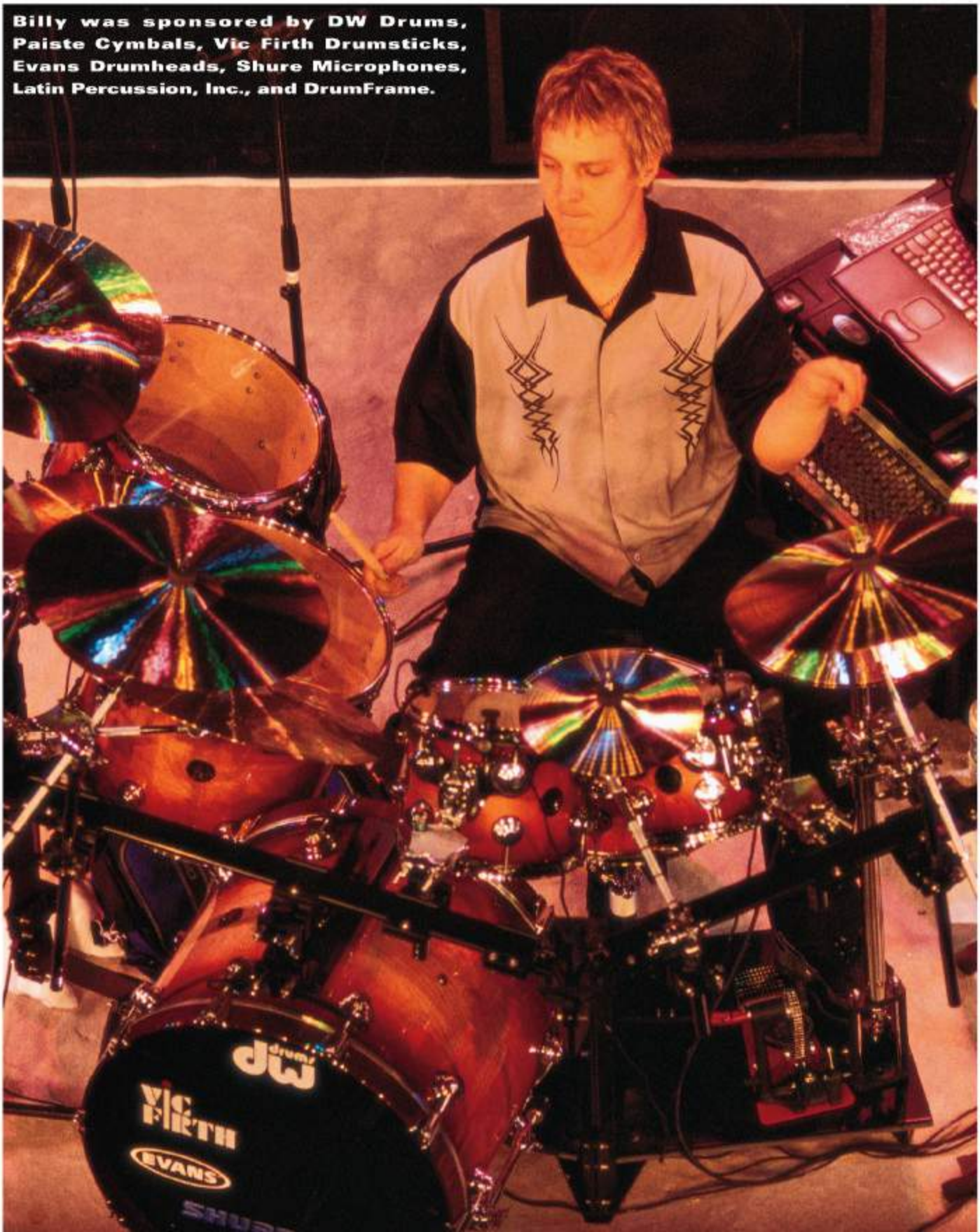
Bruce Bartlett

Baron Browne

Tom Coster

Billy Ashbaugh

Modern Drummer 2002 Drum Festival Weekend



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Tommy Igoe

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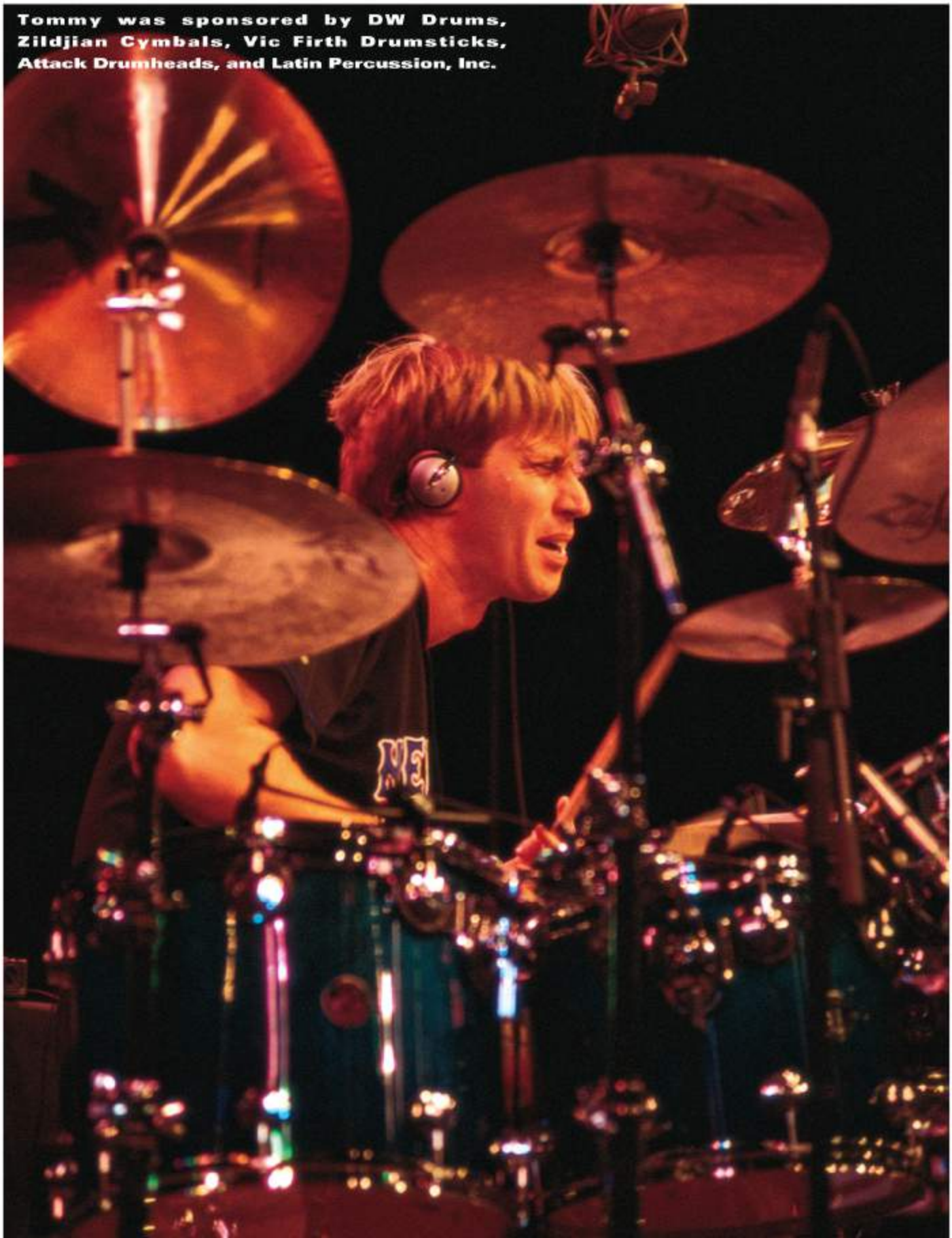

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Zildjian

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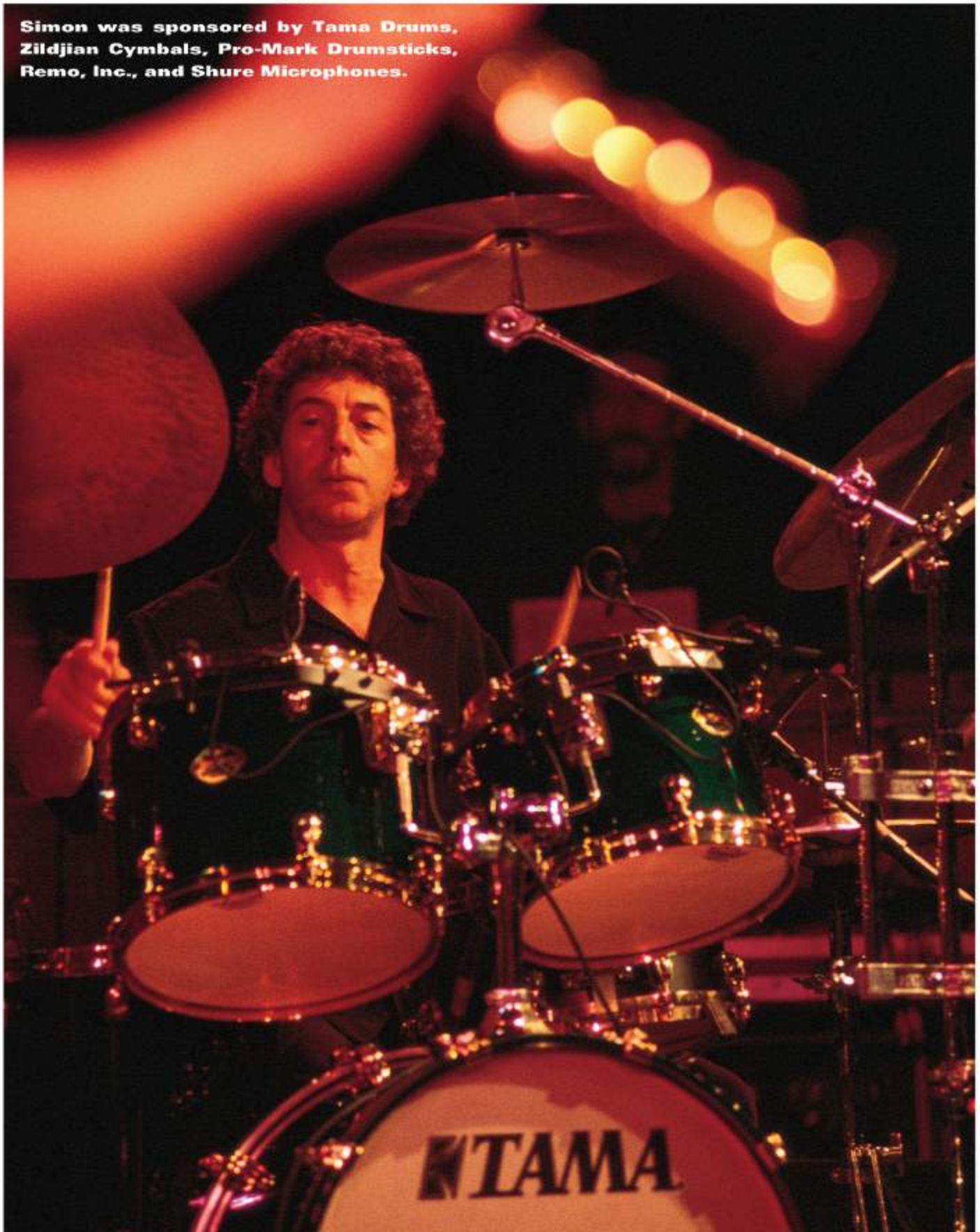
Simon Phillips & Vantage Point

Modern Drummer 2002 Drum Festival Weekend



Simon was sponsored by Tama Drums, Zildjian Cymbals, Pro-Mark Drumsticks, Remo, Inc., and Shure Microphones.

Walt Fowler

Brandon Fields

Dave Carpenter

Jeff Babko

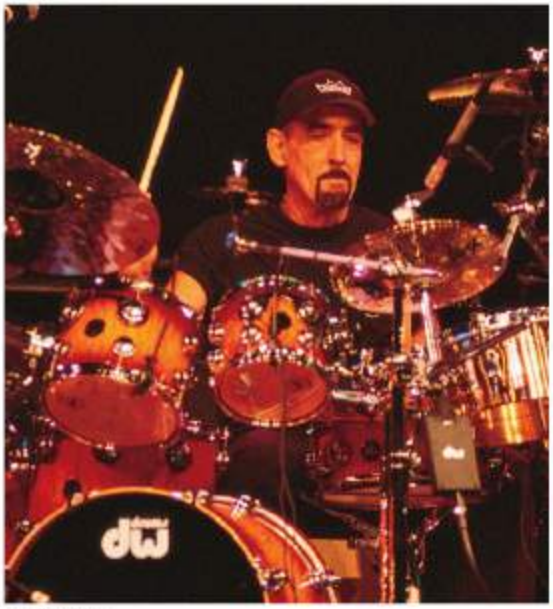
The Reyes Family

Walfredo Sr., Walfredo Jr., Danny

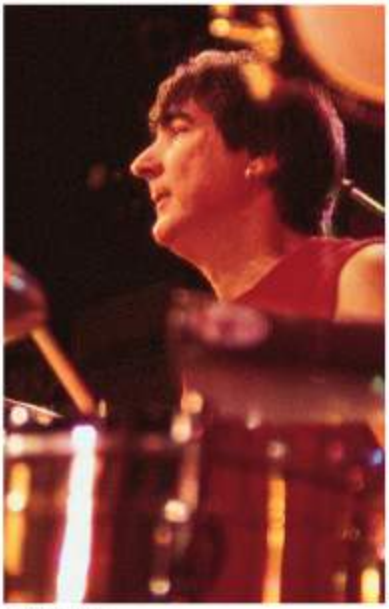
Modern Drummer 2002 Drum Festival Weekend

Walfredo Sr., Walfredo Jr., and Danny were sponsored by Latin Percussion, Inc., Mapex Drums, Sabian Cymbals, Regal Tip Drumsticks, and Remo, Inc. Equipment support for Walfredo Reyes Jr.: Drum Workshop. Equipment support for Danny Reyes: Gibraltar Hardware.

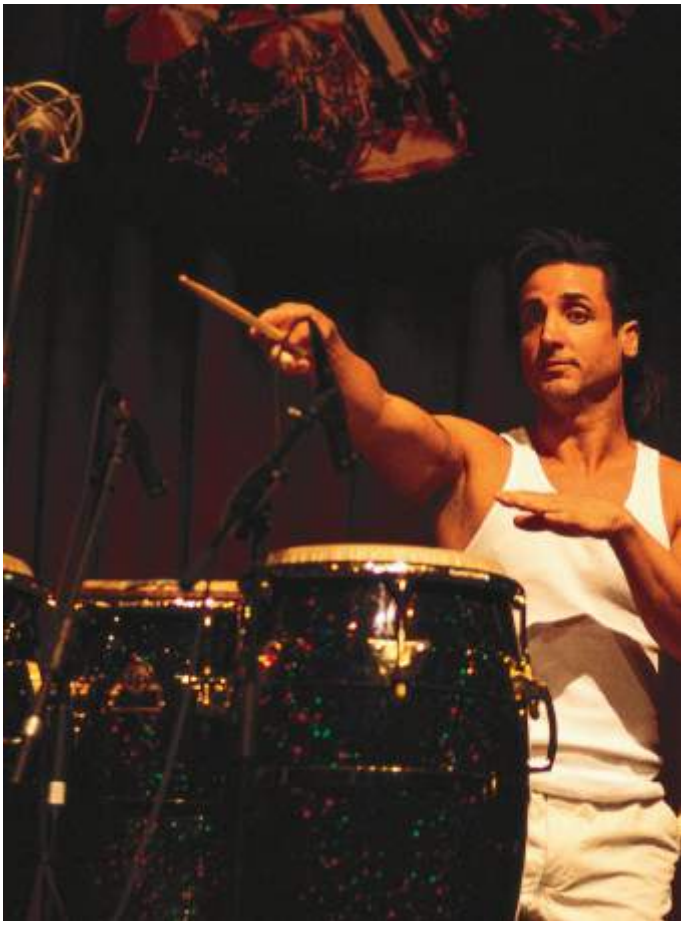
Danny



Walfredo Sr.



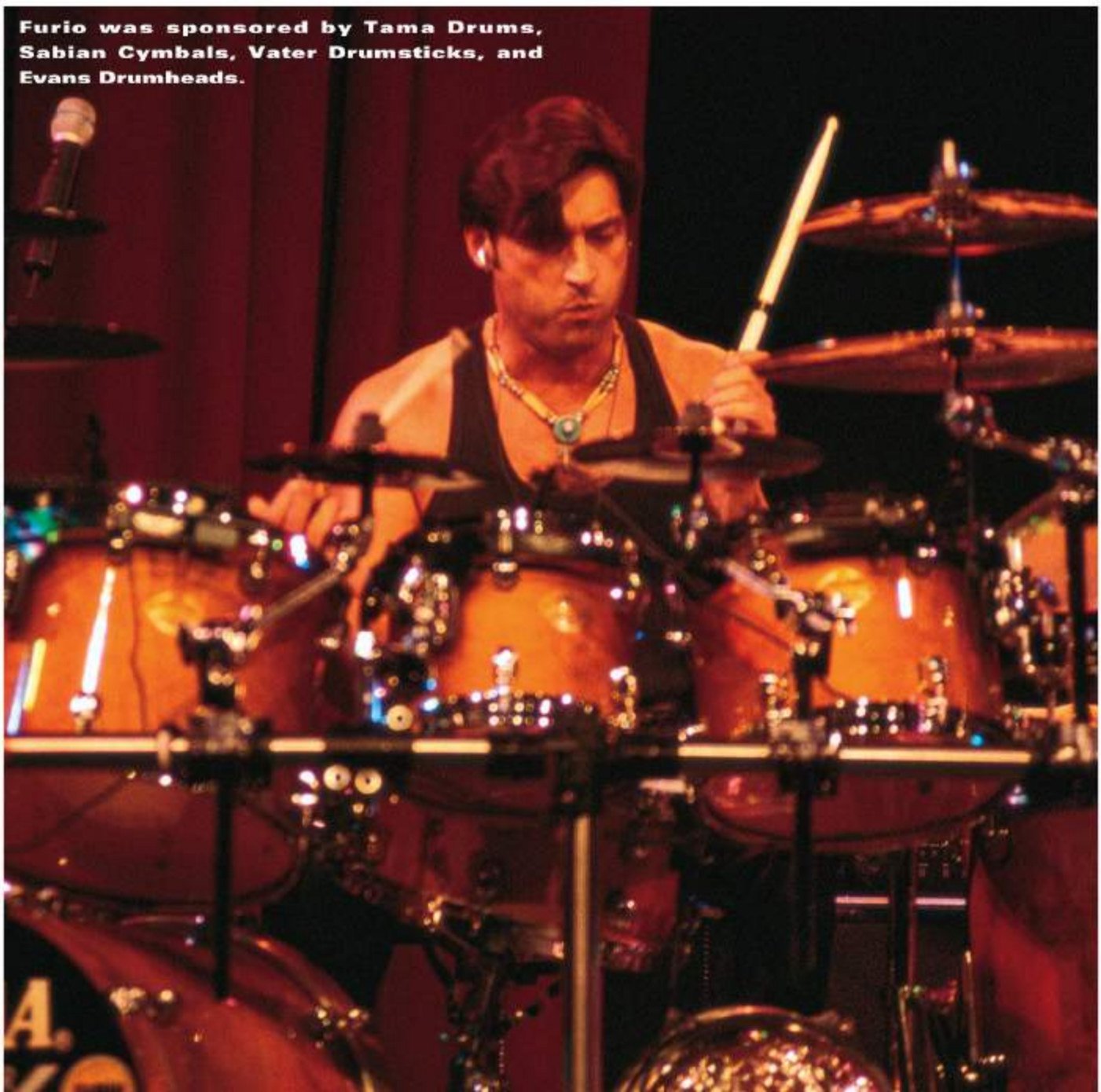
Walfredo Jr.



MD's INTERNATIONAL SHOWCASE

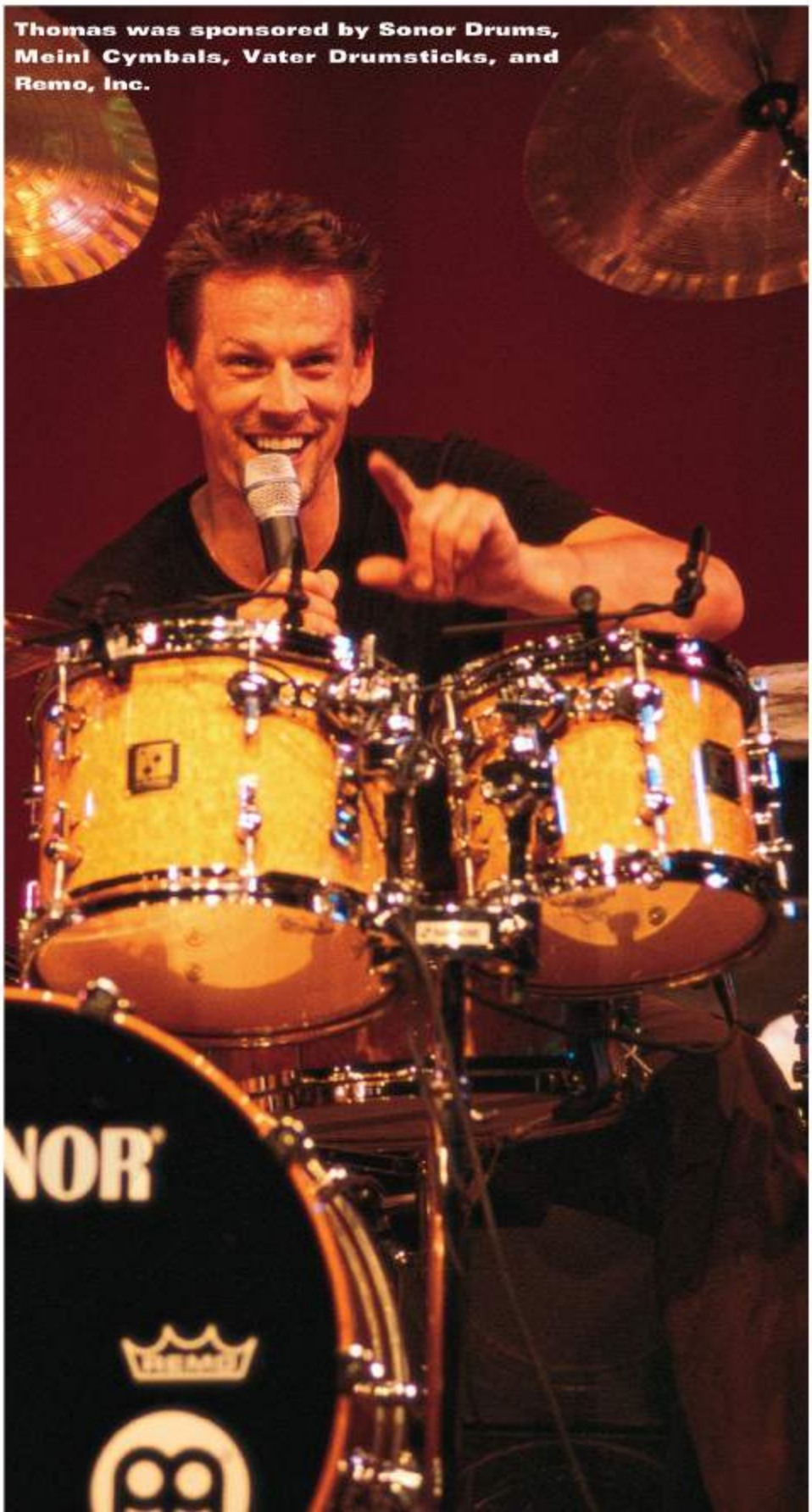
Furio Chirico

Modern Drummer 2002 Drum Festival Weekend



Furio was sponsored by Tama Drums, Sabian Cymbals, Vater Drumsticks, and Evans Drumheads.

Thomas Lang



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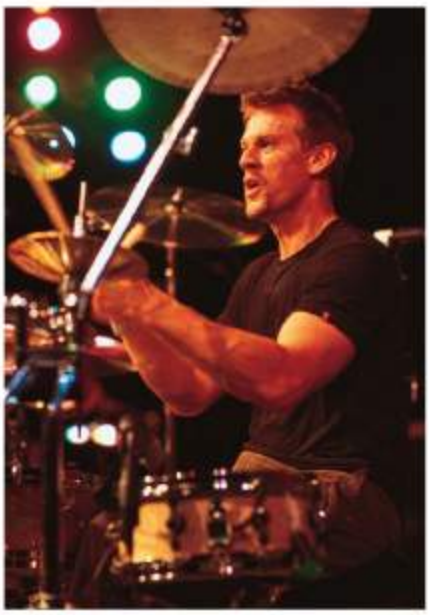

Jimmy DeGrasso

Modern Drummer 2002 Drum Festival Weekend

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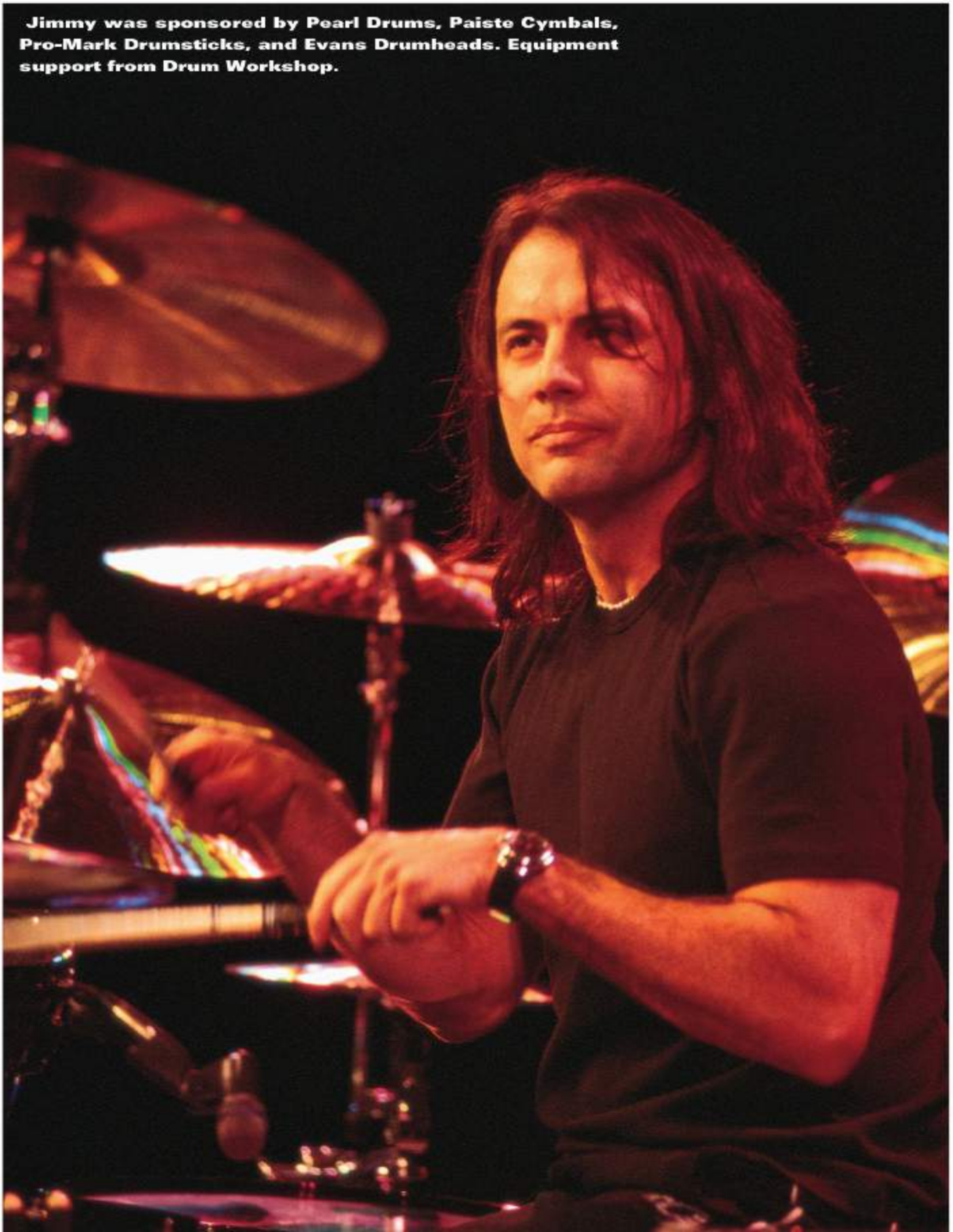
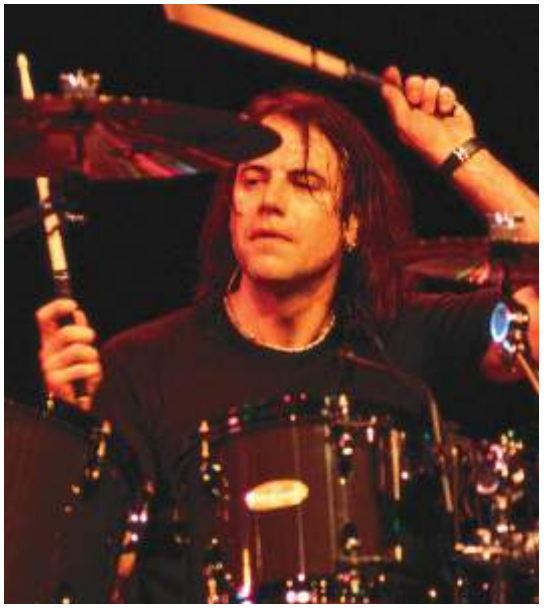
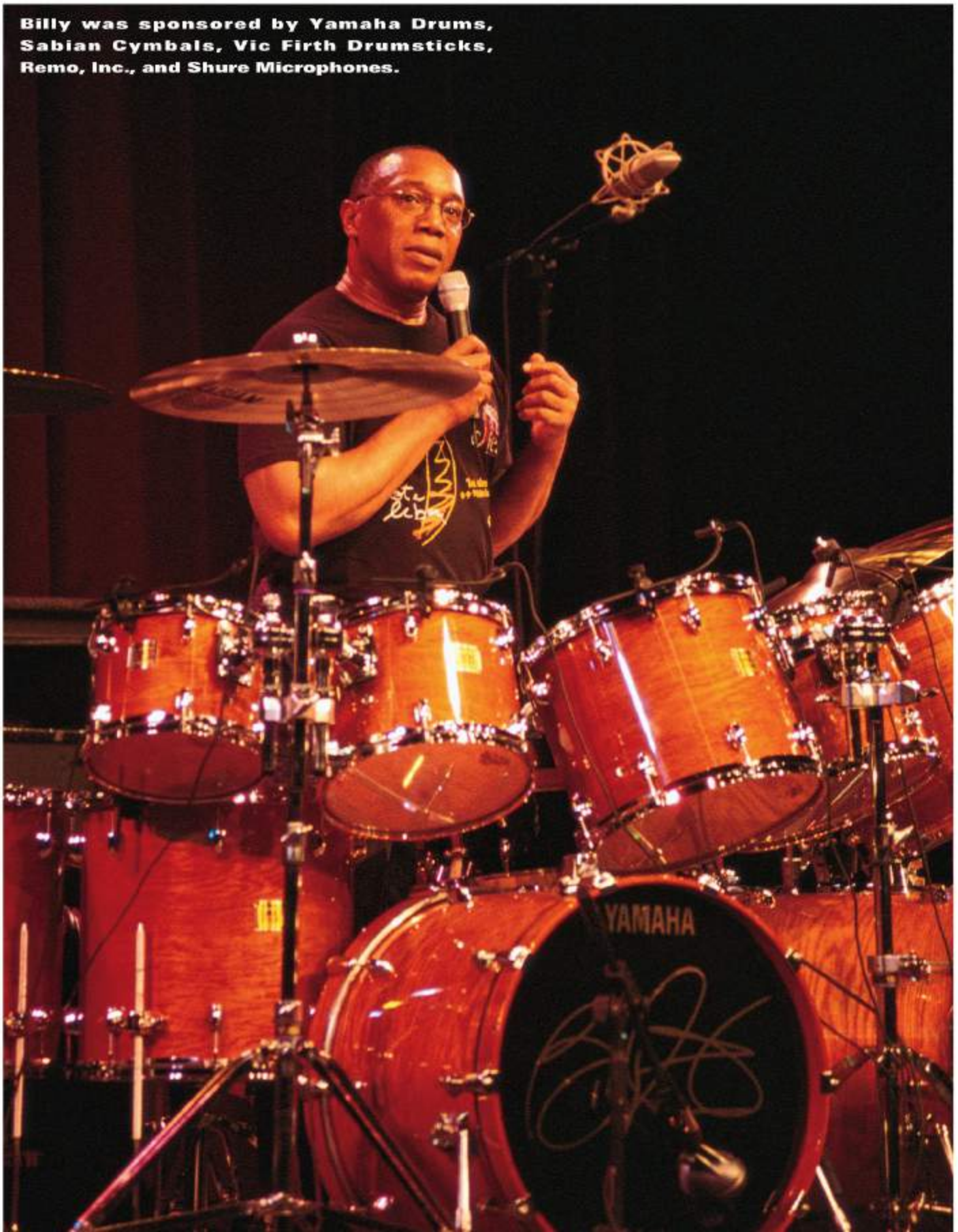




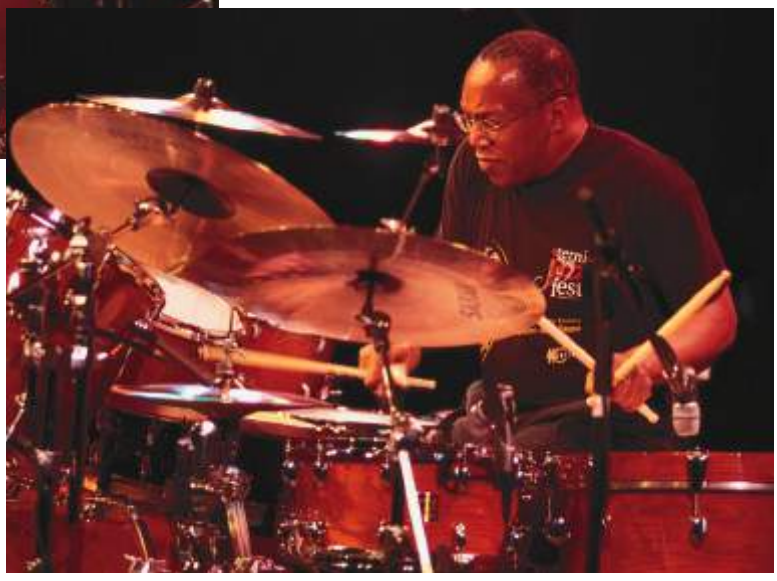
Billy Cobham

Modern Drummer 2002 Drum Festival Weekend



Billy was sponsored by Yamaha Drums, Sabian Cymbals, Vic Firth Drumsticks, Remo, Inc., and Shure Microphones.

YAMAHA



Rick Marotta
With Will Lee & Ross Bolton

Modern Drummer 2002 Drum Festival Weekend

Tom Scott

Will Lee

Ross Bolton

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Understanding The Language Of Music

Part 13: Chord Alterations

by Ron Spagnardi

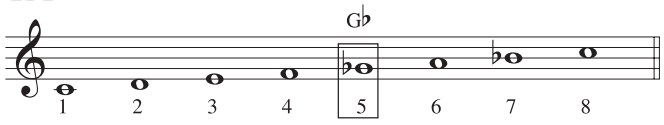
Last month we learned about chord extensions (the 9th, 11th, and 13th degrees of the scale). This month we'll look at the many possible *alterations* that can be made on basic chordal structures.

When we alter a chord, we change some of the chord tones and extension notes for more color and tonal variety. Among the most common alterations are the ♭5th, #5th, ♭9th, #9th, #11th, and ♭13th. Let's look at each one individually, using a C7 chord as an example.

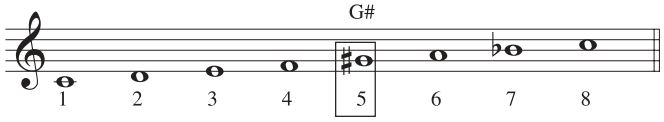
The ♭5th And #5th

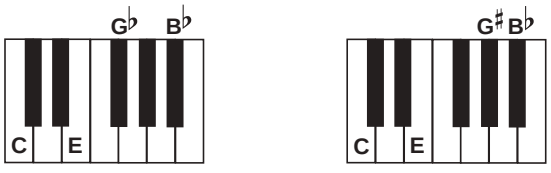
Look at the two examples below. Example 1A shows a C scale with a lowered 7th, plus a ♭5th (G♭). Example 1B is the same scale with a #5th (G#).

1A



1B





Here are both altered 5ths notated on the staff. The symbol for a ♭5th chord is C7♭5. The symbol for the #5th chord is C7#5.

2

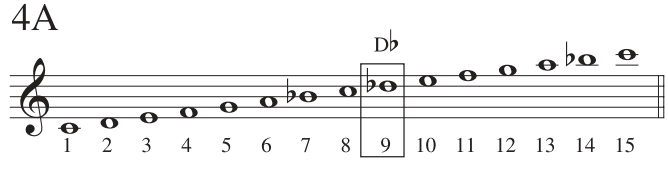
Next you'll find the ♭5th and #5th chords notated in every key. Try them all on your keyboard.

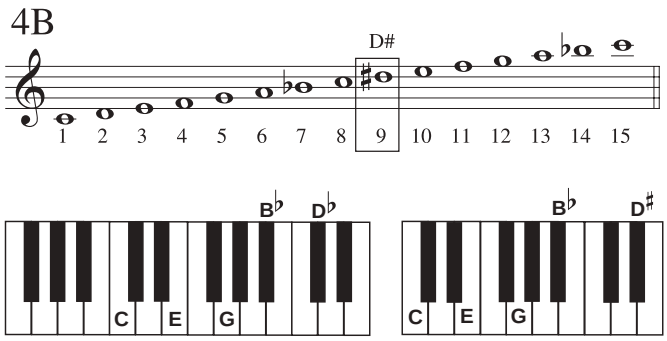
3

The ♭9th And #9th

Two other common alterations are the ♭9th and #9th. Example 4A shows the same scale with a ♭9th (D♭). Example 4B has a #9th (D#). Remember, the natural 9th is the same as the 2nd degree of the scale, but an octave higher.

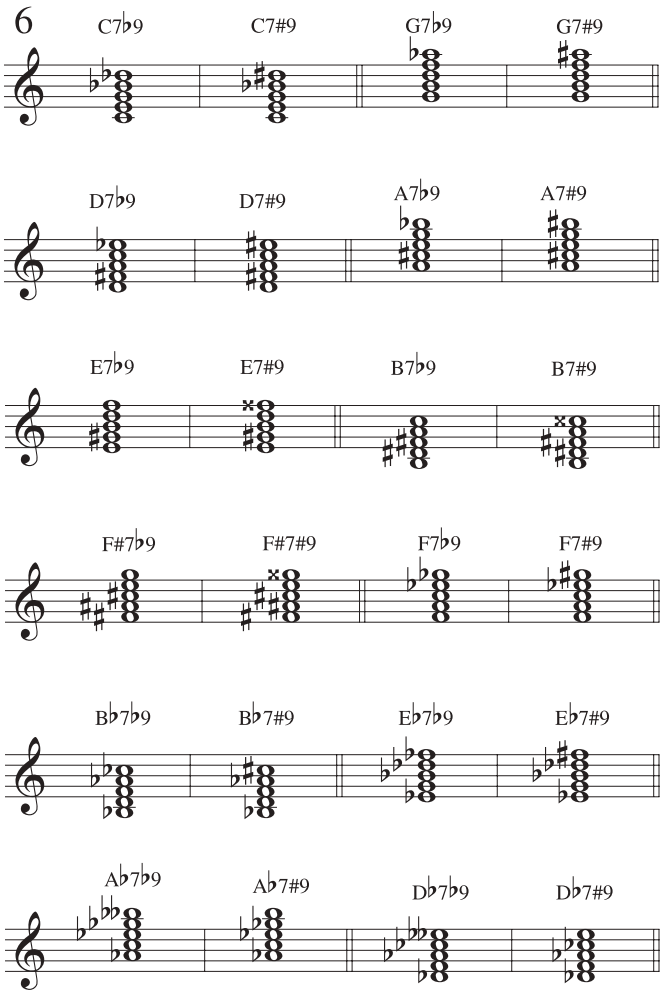
4A

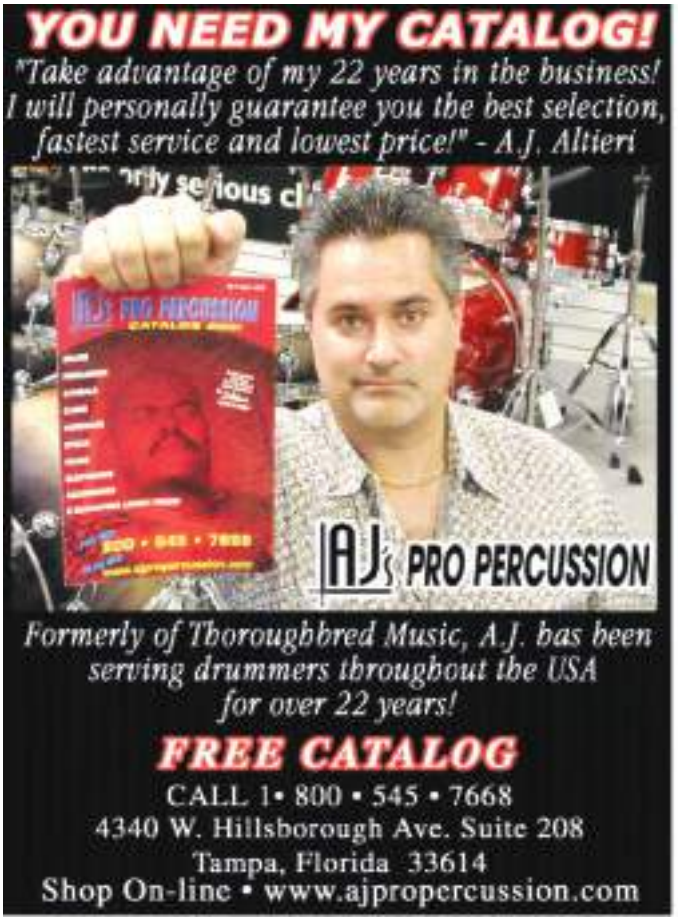




Next up are the ♭9th and #9th chords notated on the staff. The symbol for a ♭9th chord is C7♭9. The symbol for a #9th chord is C7#9.

Below you'll find the ♭9th and #9th chords notated on the staff in every key. Play the root, 3rd, 5th, and ♭7th with the left hand, and the ♭9th and #9th with the right.





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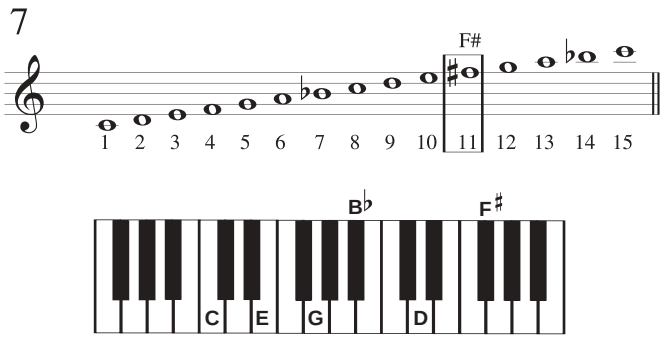
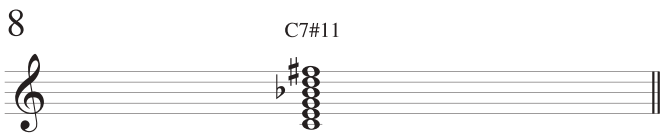
The #11th Chord

The scale below includes a #11th (F#), another altered extension very common in progressive music. Remember, the natural 11th is the same as the 4th degree of the scale, only an octave higher.



Here's the chord on the staff. The symbol for this chord is C7#11. The natural 9th is included in the chord unless omitted or altered in the symbol. Now try finding the 9th and #11th in every key. Play the root, 3rd, 5th, and ♭7th with the left hand, and the 9th and #11th in the right.

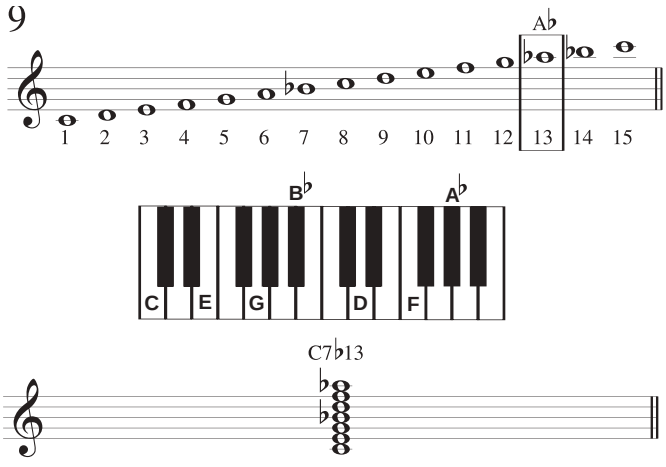


At this point, you've very likely noticed that the #11th and ♭5th are actually the *same note*. These notes are called enharmonic equivalents. Why two designations for the same note? The #11th implies that a natural 5th is *included* in the basic chord. The ♭5th designation tells us that the natural 5th has been *replaced* by the ♭5th. Simply put, the ♭5th is an alteration of the basic chord, while the #11th is an *altered extension*.

The 13th

Our final alteration of an extension note is the ♭13th. The following example shows the C scale (with a lowered♭7th) and a 13th (A♭). The symbol for this chord is C7 ♭13. The natural 9th and 11th are included unless omitted or altered in the chord symbol.

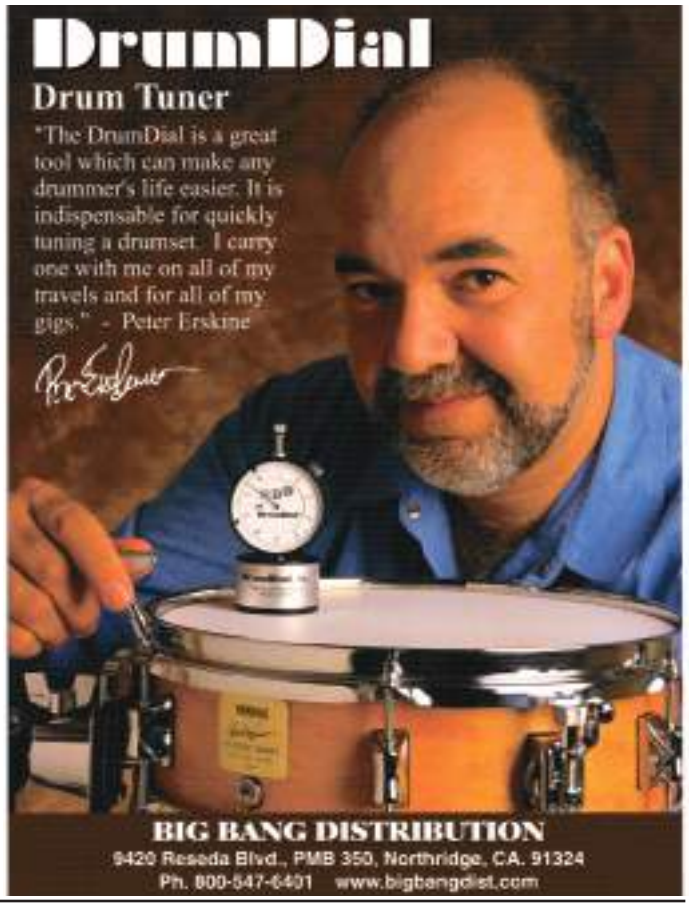
Remember that the 13th is the same as the 6th degree of the scale, but an octave higher. Experiment with the ♭13th in every key. Here again, play the root, 3rd, 5th, and ♭7th in the left hand, and the 9th, 11th, and ♭13th in the right hand.



Below you'll find a list of the most common combinations of extension notes and alterations used in modern music, with our C7 chord as an example.

C9	C9♯5
C11	C7♯11
C13	C13♭9
C7♭5	C13♯9
C7♯5	C7♭9♭5
C7♭9	C7♭9♯5
C7♯9	C7♯9♭5
C9♭5	C7♯9♯5

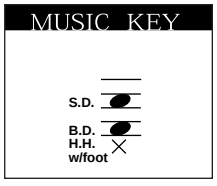
As you can see, there are numerous combinations of altered chords and chords with altered extensions. Spend some time this month practicing the combinations above in different keys. Next month we'll examine some of the chord progressions commonly used in different types of music.



Understanding Drumset Mechanics

Tips For Solving Basic Technique Issues

by Doug Tann



It seems that no matter how long we've been playing drumset, technique challenges pop up from time to time. Sometimes these *should* be easy to execute, but in fact are quite challenging. In this article we'll examine one of the fundamental necessities in drumset mechanics, the ability to maintain a pulse with the left foot while playing groupings and phrases in and around that pulse.

Try the following exercises, and see how you do. (They're designed to challenge your coordination.)

Maintaining a downbeat pulse with the left foot

Maintaining a pulse with the left foot against double strokes

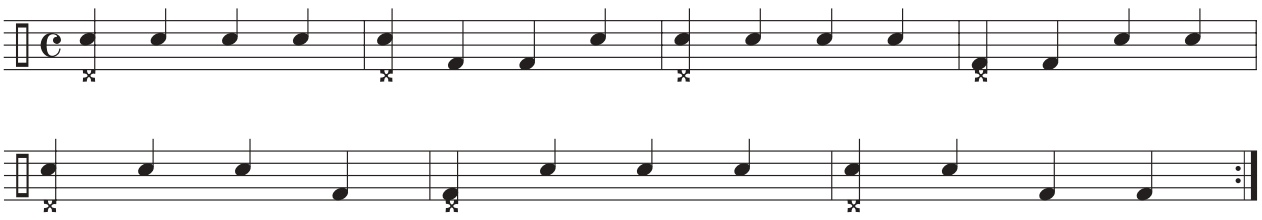
Phrasing Over The Barline

Threes

Fives

Fives can be difficult, as we don't normally come across a left-foot stroke on the second beat of a double-kick stroke. The key here is to play both kick strokes with the same velocity, and make sure you don't flam against the downbeat.

Sevens



As with any new exercise, the use of a metronome is highly recommended. It's also recommended that you start these exercises very slowly (quarter note = 60 bpm), as it will be difficult to negotiate 16th notes if you start things off too quickly.

Doug Tann has played and/or recorded with Stanley Clarke, Ashford & Simpson, Regina Carter, Della Reese, and many others. He is the author of three drum instruction books, The Forgotten Foot, Multi-Level Ostinato Drumming, *and* Compound Odd Meter Groupings.

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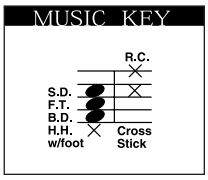
More Moeller Moves

Applying The Technique To The Drumset

by John Riley



Since my recent article on the Moeller stroke (March '02 *MD*) has created renewed interest in the attributes of the motion, in this column we'll explore some of its drumset applications. You may want to refer back to my original article before working on the examples here.

Although the stroke was originally used while standing and playing on a parade drum, the motion is perfectly suited for today's drumset player. I use the motion to help me play a wide array of brisk repeated notes in either hand or both hands together.

The Moeller stroke works perfectly when playing a fast bossa nova. Use the whipping action to execute accents on the cymbal in unison with the cross-stick on the snare drum.

When playing up-tempo jazz, vary the cymbal pattern by interspersing groups of repeated notes that are accomplished incorporating Moeller strokes.

Moeller also works great for adding variety to comping. At medium tempos, play triplets on the snare drum. The whipping action can be used to create accents on downbeats or upbeats.

Playing triplets phrased in groups of four notes creates a hip hemiola.

Contrapuntal solo material can be developed by playing a Moeller ostinato in one hand while playing syncopated phrases with the other hand.

My original Moeller article contained exercises for developing the motion. Those same phrases can be played on the drumset. Try putting some of the accented notes on the toms.

Experiment with Moeller. Refine the motion through repetition on the practice pad, and then have fun with it on the drumset. Good luck.

John Riley's career includes work with such artists as John Scofield, Mike Stern, Woody Herman, and Stan Getz. He has also written two critically acclaimed books, The Art Of Bop Drumming *and* Beyond Bop Drumming, *published by Manhattan Music.*

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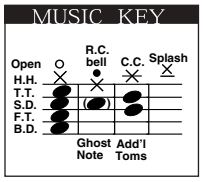
Incubus's

Jose Pasillas

Morning View

by Ed Breckenfeld



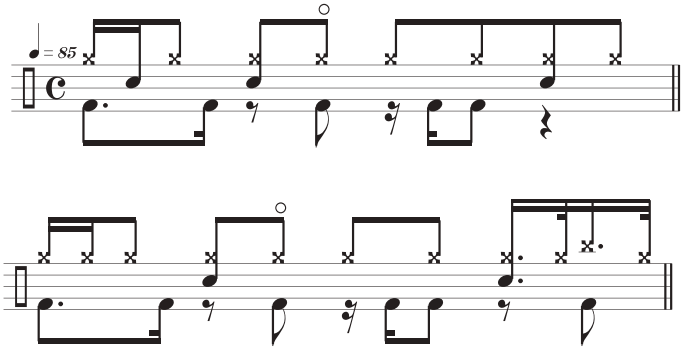
Incubus follows up their multi-platinum breakthrough album, *Make Yourself*, by expanding into more progressive territories. *Morning View* provides a wealth of sonic delights, one of which is the drumming of Jose Pasillas. As usual, Jose's popping snare drives the music along, while he energizes the band with his intricate drum patterns. Let's look at a few examples.

"Nice To Know You"

This up-tempo verse groove takes a disorienting turn when Jose follows a measure of 2/4 with an off-beat snare accent in the next measure.

"Wish You Were Here"

Jose spices up his playing with subtle details, like occasional 16th and 32nd notes on the hi-hat in the second verse of this tune.



"Blood On The Ground"

Here's a terrifically quirky fill from this song's bridge. Jose utilizes the whole drumkit while hardly ever hitting the same piece twice in a row.

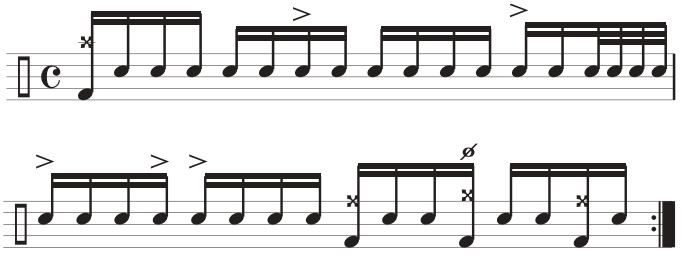
"Warning"

The ending of this track features some extraordinary cymbal work.

"Echo"

Jose uses brush-sticks on this tune for a delicate change of pace.

Brush-sticks are also perfect for fast single and double strokes on the snare drum, as in this pre-chorus pattern.



"Have You Ever"

Jose's use of high-pitched tom flourishes in his beats brings to mind the Police-era drumming of Stewart Copeland.

"Are You In?"

The album's funkiest tune opens with this around-the-toms-and-back triplet fill. Movement around the drumset with triplets is easier to pull off using the following sticking patterns: RRL and/or RLL.

The Comfort Factor

Making Everyone Else Feel Good

by Ron Hefner

At a recent gig, I was hanging with the other musicians on a break, when I heard a comment that expressed what drumming is truly about. The pianist, referring to drummers he had worked with on other gigs, said, "Most of these drummers, I can't get comfortable with them until about the third set. That's how long it takes them to get some kind of groove going. They're good drummers, but they can't seem to settle in."

I immediately replied, "Then they're not good drummers."

"Well," he replied, "They're good drummers, but it seems to take them a while to get locked in with the time."

I repeated, "Then they're not good drummers."

Clearly, this conversation needed a clear definition of a "good" drummer. I maintain that if a drummer can't sit down and create a comfortable time feel from the get-go, he or she is not a good drummer.

I've always paid close attention to comments from other players on the topic of "comfort" with drummers. Here are a few more I've heard and filed away over the years:

"He spends too much time listening to himself play."

"He hits too many accents; it's like he's trying to play the melody all the time."

"He plays like he's in another world."

Compare those statements with the following: "His swing was so buoyant that the players out front could lean back on it and relax." (Benny Golson on Kenny Clarke, from *Klook: The Story Of Kenny Clarke,* by Mike Hennessey.)

"Sid *listened* when he played.... The piano player in a trio could get up and take a walk; I mean the rhythm was *right there*." (Billy Taylor on Sid Catlett, from *Drummin' Men: The Heartbeat Of Jazz,* by Burt Korall.)

"You could lay back on his beat and feel as secure as it is possible to be." (Lou Stein on Dave Tough, also from *Drummin' Men.*)

Before you protest that I'm talking about some of the greatest drummers in jazz, let me point out that not one of these three players was noted for dazzling technique of the Buddy Rich variety. Yet these were three of the most in-demand players of their respective eras. Why? Because they had the gift of *listening*, which translated to a feeling of total comfort for the musicians they worked with.

If a drummer can't sit down and create a comfortable time feel from the get-go, he or she is not a good drummer.

And don't get the idea that "comfort" in this context translates to being laid-back: These drummers kicked *ass*. Tough in particular was credited for seeming to levitate entire rooms with the intensity of his time feel. Both Klook and Big Sid have garnered similar praises.

Time

So what's the secret of "comfortable" drumming? There are several. One is to forget about demonstrating all your hip licks every time you sit down to play. An older horn player once told me that Max Roach ruined all the drummers who came after him. I asked him to elaborate. He said, "After Max, every drummer turned into a soloist and tried to create all these 'statements' on the drums. It disrupted the flow of the time."

I pointed out that Max always played beautiful time, and he replied, "Yes, but it wasn't Max's time that impressed those other drummers."

Good point. I remember the first time I heard Max when I was a kid. I went straight to the woodshed and tried to copy his solo licks. It never occurred to me to study his time feel. This is typical of younger drummers, who are often hyperconcerned with technique. They often feel that time playing is something so basic that you master it early on, then you proceed to concentrate on "licks." My younger students always want to know how to play this or that lick; they almost never ask me about creating a comfortable time feel on the ride cymbal or how to get in the pocket with a band. But what could be more essential for a drummer, in *any* kind of music, than keeping time?

The truth is, comfortable timekeeping is as difficult to learn as technical stuff is. I think drummers who grew up with jazz have a better understanding of this, because of the prevalence of jam sessions. As a young, aspiring player trying to establish a reputation, I was kicked off a few bandstands at those sessions, while players with less technique were permitted to stay up for entire sets. This used to drive me *nuts*. "I can cut these guys to shreds," I used to tell myself.

Talk about deluded! The truth is, the other drummers may not have been as technically proficient as I was, but they concerned themselves with playing good time. I, on the other hand, was busy showing my you-know-what. I eventually figured out that the other musicians on the bandstand couldn't care less about a drummer's ability to play four time sig-

natures at once. What they *did* care about was a drummer's ability to accompany them in the most supportive, musical way.

Independence

In jazz playing, the comfort factor is undermined if the drummer hasn't mastered independence. There are two varieties of independence. One is rhythmic, meaning that you can play the beat with one limb (usually the right hand on the cymbal) and play rhythmic counterpoint with the other limbs (usually the snare and bass drum) at the same time. The other kind of independence is dynamic independence: This means that you can vary the dynamics of your figures on the drums *without* varying the dynamics of the cymbal beat.

Many drummers have good rhythmic independence but little or no dynamic independence. They can't hit an accent on the bass or snare without also hitting the cymbal a bit harder. This disrupts the "comfort" of that steady, swinging ride cymbal beat. When you snap that rimshot on the snare drum, your ride cymbal shouldn't *necessarily* notice it.

Being Ready

Comfortable drumming also requires that you be physically "tuned up." A simple warm-up on a practice pad before a gig works wonders. It limbers up the muscles in your fingers and wrists and gets them into the playing mode. The first couple of tunes in a set are not supposed to be stretching exercises. You should already be limbered up and ready to go from the first note.

I remember reading in *Modern Drummer* about Steve Gadd warming up on a practice pad backstage before a performance with the Buddy Rich band. He wasn't practicing licks or rudiments; he was zeroed in on the shuffle beat he was going to play. I guarantee that when Steve got up there and hit, the feel was as comfortable as an old shoe.

Gadd's zen-like preparation for his performance points out the other aspect of being "tuned up": your mental state. Your mind needs to be sharp. Drumming is kind of like driving a car, in the sense that many split-second decisions have to be made during the trip. From the first note, the drummer has to be simultaneously aware of the tempo, the rhythm section's interpretation of that tempo, the volume of the drums in relation to the band, the form of the tune itself, and numerous other factors.

To handle all these requirements skillfully and maintain a settled, comfortable groove is no mean feat. A distracted or unfocused mind won't cut it. For me, this means no caffeine before the gig; it makes me too edgy. Other substances, legal or otherwise, also have a detrimental affect. Your mind has to be tuned in to the music and nothing else.

Soloing

A comfortable drummer also plays better solos. When you get up on the stand with comfort as your focus, you will discover a bonus: Your breaks, choruses, and solos will sound better because the "groove factor" will be in place.

For examples of this, look no further than the great Philly Joe Jones. When Philly soloed, he let the time dictate what he played, rather than employing a continuous stream of licks. Check out the drum breaks and choruses on Hank Mobley's "Workout," from the album of the same name, or "Two Bass Hit" and "Billy Boy" from Miles Davis's *Milestones*. These classic solos have an incredibly settling effect on the listener because the time is so strong. Philly was the *king* of comfort.

In the July 2001 issue of *Modern Drummer*, editor Ron Spagnardi wrote an editorial suggesting that the recent spate of "speed records" in drumming may be directing younger players away from the real meat-and-potatoes of the craft: making the music sound good. Truer words were never spoken.

Here's a last bit of supporting evidence from the man who invented modern drumming, the great Kenny Clarke. Upon opening his drum school in Paris in 1967, Klook said, "A drummer who just wants to dominate, who ignores the rest of the band, is like a relay captain who keeps running with the baton because he's got the strength. The rest of the team is standing there looking at him and asking, 'Where the hell's he going?'"

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A Change Is Gonna Come

Staying Open To New Music

by Billy Ward

Paul La Raia

I was recently listening to some bluegrass music, which I've fallen head over heels in love with due to the soundtrack of *Oh Brother, Where Art Thou?* This music has no drums on it whatsoever, but I *love* it. I particularly love the simplicity of the songs, the pure passion of the vocalists, and the sound of the beautiful acoustic instruments. (The guitarists all have great time, by the way.)

"How do we keep an open mind to new ideas in art when it's so darned comfortable to stick with what we already know?"

I played this stuff for a friend, who is a wonderful writer, producer, and player of another style of music. But then he started talking over it almost immediately. An hour later, he asked if I was getting into "country music" lately. But the thought occurred to me, Can we only dig what *we* do? Or does our openness to new music end at a certain age or experience? As we get older, do our ears get as brittle as our joints and bones do? Is there such a thing as aural osteoporosis?

Maybe this attitude should be called "narcissistic listening," meaning we'll only listen to music that directly has to do with *us*. Does the music have to be our style for us to relate to it? Why is that? Maybe we aren't as good as what we're listening to and it makes us feel bad.

Now I'm going to get blunt. I'd bet there are some drummers who don't appreciate more simplistic music, because they don't have the chops. What kind of chops do I mean? I mean having the ears to hear the grace, charm, and love in a simple piece of music—just as much as the ability to hear and be thrilled by complex harmonies and

technically complex music. How do we keep an open mind to new ideas in art when it's so darned comfortable to stick with what we already know? Can we relate to things outside our sphere?

I believe the answer is yes, but we have to sometimes grow in baby steps. If you have a desire to better understand jazz, don't start with John Coltrane and Elvin Jones. Try a George Shearing album, or albums by other artists such as Wes Montgomery, early George Benson, Jimmy Smith, or Art Blakey. You want to get more into rock? Use the same principles. Ease into it.

There's never any shame in asking what to listen to. I'm always asking my friends, What are you listening to? When they give an enthusiastic answer about something I haven't heard, I pick it up right away. Those are the best times—finding something *new*.

Developing New Habits

It takes patience to get into new stuff. When I hear a different-sounding song, unfamiliar chords, or an odd-sounding singer, I have to apply some patience to listen to it. Some styles of music have a technique that doesn't have to do with ripping off double paradiddles at 250 bpm. (Ask the guitar player in your band to play a picking part of even 16ths on his guitar, say at 110 bpm, and go through some simple rhythm changes. See how he does.) Playing something at a moderate tempo, but playing it even and with control, can be very hard to do. It took me a long time just to be able to play even 16ths on the darned hi-hat!

Some things are harder than they sound, and some things are easier than they sound. Do you think there exists a kind of mental technique or aesthetic chops? I do. I think there are people who have many *physical* drumming skills, but don't have the kind of chops to listen to and enjoy seemingly less complex music.

Earlier I mentioned the idea of not being as good as what we are listening to, and having that feeling affect our taste. But sometimes we catch the disease of being "above" a type of music as well. Folk music could generally qualify as an example here. It's all about one's aesthetic or perspective.

If this were a folk magazine, we might be talking about being "above" Buddy Rich: "Oh, that Buddy Rich is just too aggressive…too much testosterone…I'm interested in more subtle shades." Please don't misunderstand. I'm not saying that music by Buddy Rich, or Metallica for that matter, isn't good stuff. We're drummers, so the faster, rowdier stuff has an obvious appeal to us all.

I believe in a perfect world where people can love the harmony and beauty of a Chet Baker ballad, or bagpipe music, and then turn around and put on a David Bowie, Jeff Beck, or Buddy Rich CD. (I'm sticking with Bs here just for fun.) Can't we learn things from all music, no matter our ability, taste, or influences? Isn't art above all these trivialities? I say "Out with musical snobbery!"

Billy Ward is a successful session and touring drummer who has worked with Carly Simon, Robbie Robertson, Richard Marx, Ace Frehley, John Patitucci, Bill Champlin, and Joan Osborne. Billy can be reached at his Web site, www.billyward.com.

Martial Arts For Today's Drummer

Part 1: An Introduction To The Basics

Story by Dave Fusco
Photos by Steve Adams

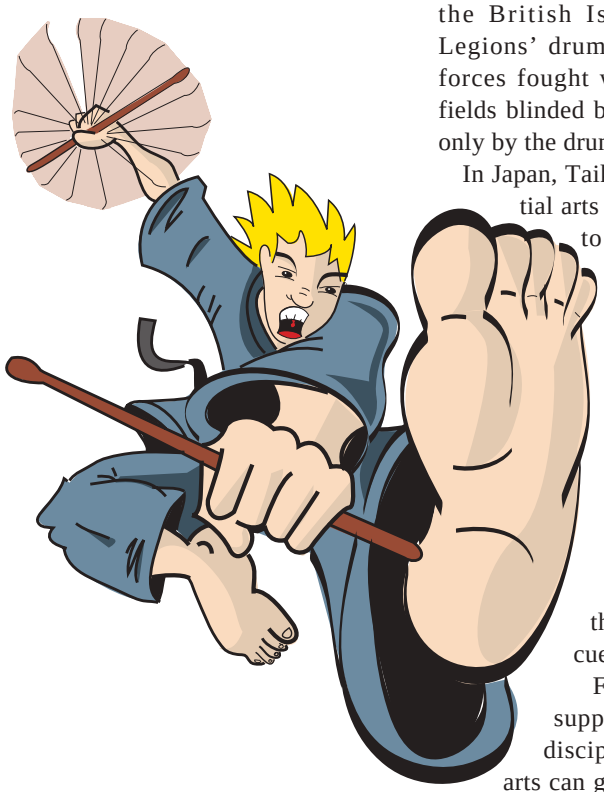


Illustration by Joe King

Since the advent of civilization, warriors have honed their skills, defended their homes, and built empires to the sound of drums. Early man sounded warnings and gathered his tribe by beating out a rhythm on hollowed logs or simple skinned instruments. The armies of Rome spread their empire from Italy to the British Isles to the beat of the Legions' drum corps. And Napoleon's forces fought with precision on battlefields blinded by musket smoke, directed only by the drummer-boy's cadence.

In Japan, Taiko drummers employ martial arts stances to gain power and to structure their rhythms. In China, Kung Fu practitioners build strength and agility by performing the Lion Dance to the hyper beat of special drums and "trashy," dissonant cymbals. In Thailand, the Philippines, and South America, groups of martial artists practice their techniques in unison, cued by the beat of a drum.

For centuries, drums have supported and guided martial disciplines. Today, the martial arts can give something back to the drummer. The principles of motion, balance, breathing, and meditation that are so integral to the martial arts can help one develop a relaxed, balanced approach to the drumset. This approach offers an improved sense of time and musical expression, with greater flow, speed, power, and independence. The martial arts offer drummers principles that can place the mind and body in harmony, allowing greater freedom to hear, interpret, and contribute to the music.

In this series of articles, we'll explore philosophies and techniques of the martial arts that can help you improve as a drummer and musician. We'll talk about balance, physical motion, flexibility, and relaxed flow. We'll discuss principles of power and speed, independence, and proper breathing, as well as endurance, conditioning, and meditative thought. We'll start with basic martial arts concepts and apply them to the drumset in the simplest sense—starting with just sitting on the drum throne. As we address more complex principles, we'll expand their application to the entire drumset and to music in general.

Practice Makes Perfect

Well, not exactly. It's really "*perfect* practice makes perfect." It's one of the best pieces of advice I ever received from *my* martial arts instructors, and one I pass on to all my students. It's a basic concept that we all have come (or will come) to realize as drummers and musicians. One has to take time to understand a new technique, phrase, or song. Learn it slowly and carefully. Then practice it correctly and repeatedly. If one practices "incorrect," one gets good at "incorrect."

Martial arts practice and drumming practice are very similar. Interdependent hand and foot patterns—each with an integral rhythm—are learned and practiced until they become second nature. Eventually, there is a flow between the body and subconscious mind, allowing one to apply these patterns without thought. We've all had that feeling of

being “in the zone” at one point in our lives. Maybe you’ve experienced it playing sports, at your job, or (hopefully) playing your drums. It’s that place where it all flows—the technique, the beat, the musical expression, and the emotion. A place where you are in balance, hearing the music and applying technique brilliantly, without hesitation, and it sounds great. It is through *perfect practice* that we strive to achieve this “zone” with regularity.

Figure 1

With regard to the information presented here, I encourage everyone to try it. After you’ve read the article, try the exercises. Apply them to your drumset playing. Practice their application often. And most of all, have fun with these ideas!

Some words of caution: Take it slow, warm up thoroughly before you begin, and don’t overdo it. A physical injury may keep you from practicing these martial arts concepts and your drums. Now, let’s get started.

Figure 2

Stance: The Basis Of Balance And Power

The first thing every martial artist learns is how to stand still. Then they learn how to stand in a balanced position of power called “the horse stance.” The horse stance is so named because when you assume this position it appears as though you are riding an imaginary horse. It’s as if you are sitting in the saddle with your knees bent and your feet in the stirrups.

The horse stance helps the practitioner to build strength in the legs and to develop a strong sense of centralized balance that will later support complex, powerful movements of the limbs. In fact, the horse stance is very much like sitting on your drum throne behind your kit. And that’s exactly how we’re going to apply this technique.

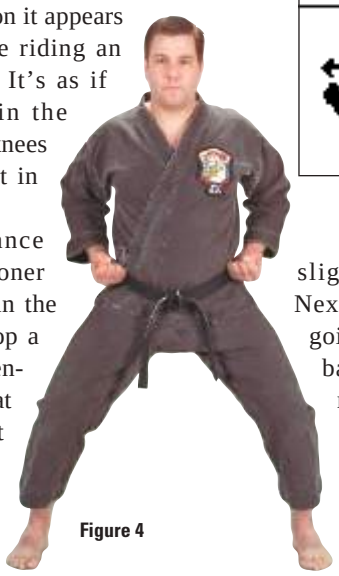
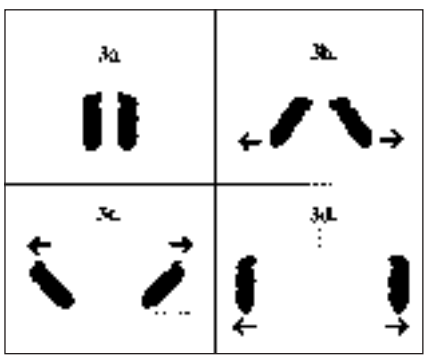


Figure 4

Assuming The Horse Stance

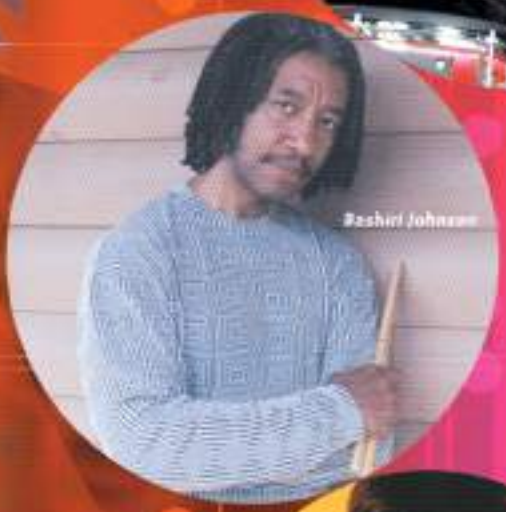
To stand in a horse stance, start by standing with a straight yet relaxed posture. Keep your feet together, back straight, arms at your sides (with a natural bend in your elbows), shoulders relaxed, head balanced comfortably on your neck, and eyes forward. Breathe gently yet deeply, in through your nose and out through your mouth (figure 1).

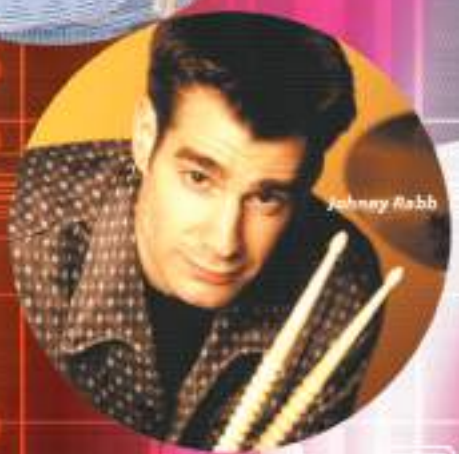
Next, make fists and bring your hands to your waist, palms up. Keep you shoulders relaxed (figure 2). Do not hunch! Pivoting on the balls of your feet, move your heels outward as far as possible. Then, pivoting on your heels, move your toes out as far as possible. Finally, move your heels out again to line up with your toes (figures 3a–3d). Your feet should be pointing straight ahead and your legs positioned



slightly wider than shoulder width. Next, bend your knees as if you were going to sit in a tall chair. Keep your back straight and your upper body relaxed. Keep breathing. You are now in a horse stance (figure 4).

From this point, experiment with your balance by moving your hips. (Do not move your feet or straighten





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your legs.) Your hips represent the heaviest central part of your body. Your body's center of gravity, called the "hara" in Japanese, or "tanden" (tan t'ien) in Chinese, is a point approximately two inches below your navel. In martial arts philosophy, this point is considered the gathering place of a universal form of energy called "ki" or "chi." Consciously move this point until you feel your balance change. Move out of balance and then back into balance. The objective is to feel rooted to the earth through your

Interdisciplinary Thoughts

by Richie Morales

In karate and many other martial arts there exists a stylized series of prearranged dance-like forms. These demonstrate methods of attack, defense, and counterattack called "kata." There are approximately thirty different kata in common usage today. It's said that each kata must be practiced from 3,000 to 10,000 times before the karateka (karate practitioner) can really know it and understand its application. Kata is meant to improve power, speed, and coordination, and its practice becomes meditative in nature over time. Hard work and repetition is the order of the day.

Progress is made slowly through perseverance and the setting and attainment of small goals, one step at a time. Whether one is studying martial arts for self-defense or for spiritual improvement through the unification of mind and body, the practice of kata is essential. Indeed, many masters of the martial arts practice kata daily well into what most people consider old age.

Some people might think it odd that I mention the study of an aggressive martial art in relation to the art of drumming and making music. I certainly don't mean to compare playing music to physical combat—though at times making a living in the music business *can* seem like war. (That's another story). As I mentioned earlier, in karate the kata are basic practice moves that form the physical vocabulary upon which the art is based, and which must be mastered. In music there are basic skills that must be physically mastered as well, such as fingerings, stickings, scales, modes, and drum rudiments—not to mention reading skills and theoretical knowledge. In both disciplines the repetition necessary for the development of the requisite skills can become boring and tedious. The speed at which individuals progress varies. At times, progress seems imperceptible. It's easy to become discouraged or "burnt out." This is true whether one is learning to play the drums just for fun or if the stakes are higher.

When I practice, I try to clear my mind and get into a zone or meditative place for at least part of my session in order to focus more intently on whatever it is I'm trying to accomplish that day. A martial arts student does the same thing when entering the "dojo" or training hall. By setting small daily goals, like cleaner execution of a technique, playing with greater power and control at a particular tempo, or learning a new tune or a groove from a new rhythmic style, I try to motivate myself to improve my musical skills.

A strong work ethic, perseverance in the face of adversity, self-discipline, and dedication to self-improvement are only a few of the aspects of the warrior or "Budo" spirit necessary to succeed in the martial arts. These traits will well serve a drummer in his or her pursuit of musical goals, too.

Richie Morales has recorded or performed with The Brecker Brothers, Al Di Meola, Dave Valentin, Bill Evans, Dave Brubeck, Grover Washington Jr., Dianne Reeves, Spyro Gyra, and Mike Stern.

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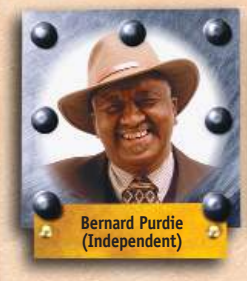
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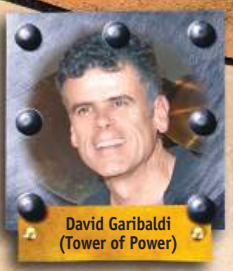
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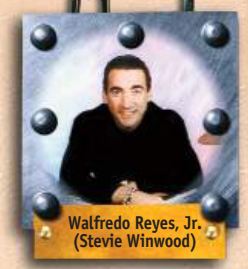
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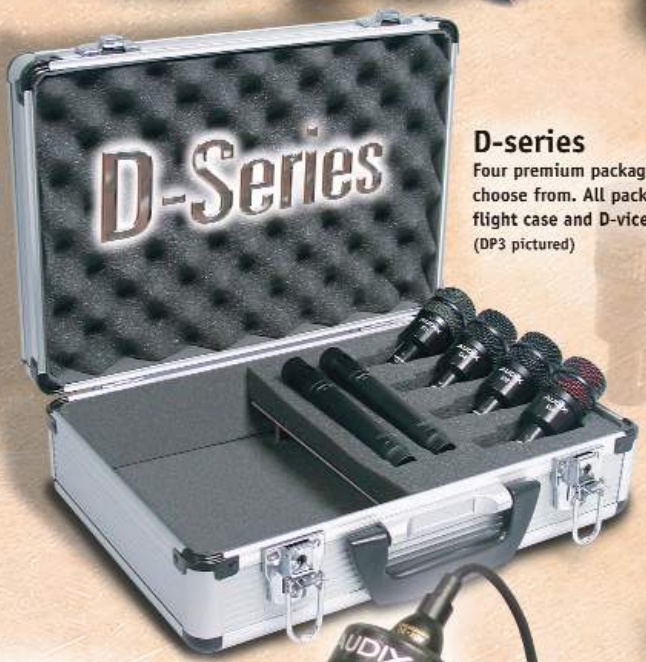

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tanden point without excessive tension. Keep your body centrally aligned, with your spine naturally straight, head erect, neck and shoulders relaxed, and hands palm-up at your waist (figure 5).

After you've practiced the horse stance for a little while and feel balanced, try swinging your arms around your body in a variety of circular patterns. You should feel rooted and centered, as if every limb orbits on your tanden. Breathe deeply. Close your eyes and concentrate on breathing…in…and out…. Can you feel the balance and a sense of centralized energy? Now let's apply this principle to the drumset.

Figure 5

Achieving Optimum Balance On The Drum Throne

There's a lot of discussion amongst drummers about how to best sit at the drumset—high, low, close, or far. The answer is: You should sit in the optimum position for you. The horse stance exercise we just performed can help you find this ideal point of balance.

Move away from your kit and start with just your throne. Make sure you have a sturdy one, with a seating platform that firmly supports your body and doesn't wobble. I use a throne with a lever-actuated gas-lift mechanism that I've found particularly useful for this exercise. But any sturdy, adjustable throne will work.

Start by adjusting your throne to its highest setting, and take a seat. In a pseudo version of the horse stance, align your hips comfortably on the seat. Keep your spine naturally straight (don't slouch), your head balanced, your eyes forward, and your shoulders relaxed. Rest your hands comfortably on your thighs. Close your eyes and try to visualize your center of gravity—your tanden.

Next, adjust your throne so that you can place your feet flat on the floor in a wide, comfortable stance, just as if you had your snare drum between your legs. Align your body as before and try to feel your balance point again (figure 6). Imagine yourself playing. Grab a pair of sticks and move your arms around your body. More importantly, move your feet and legs as if you were playing your pedals. If you play heel-up, bounce on the balls of your feet. If you play heel-down, tap your feet on the floor.

Figure 6

Remember the concept of feeling rooted to the earth, yet having the sense that all your limbs revolve around your body's center point? Continue to adjust your throne up and down until you find the point that allows optimum balance around your center of gravity.

In working through the horse stance concept for the drumset, I found that my optimum position was with my thighs virtually parallel to the floor. I then moved my bass drum pedals and hi-hat into the arrangement, made a few fine adjustments, and was pleasantly surprised at the improvement in my foot speed and control. I dis-

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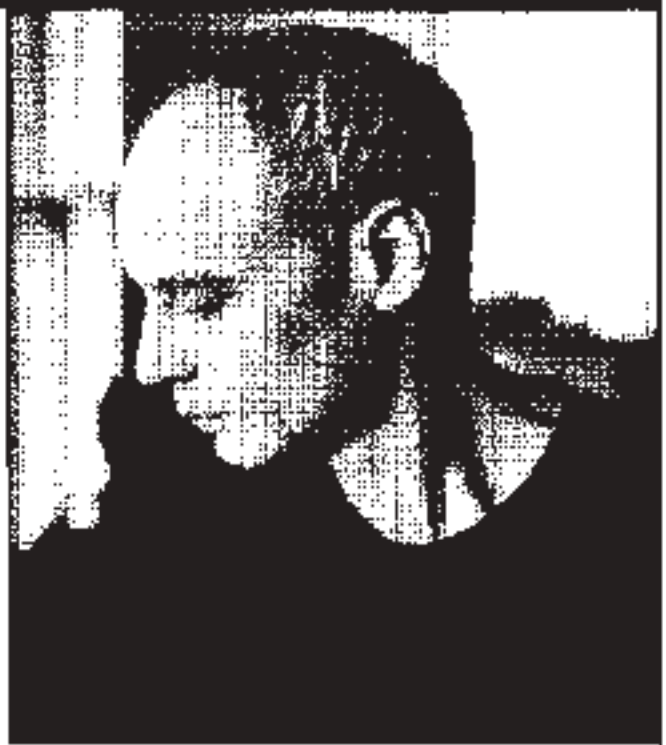

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covered that for many years I had been sitting too high, and that such a position was contributing to too much tension in my legs. Through the application of this martial arts technique, my drumming is now more relaxed and comfortable.

Experiment with this idea to find *your* optimum position. Add your hi-hat and bass drum pedal(s) and fine-tune your seating arrangement for optimum balance and flow. Remember to keep your posture erect yet relaxed and to breathe deeply, in through your nose and out through your mouth.

The Foundation For Advancement

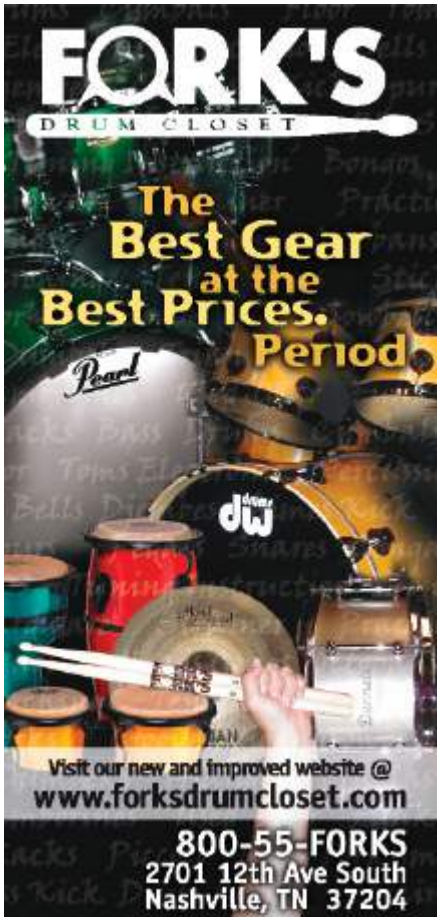
Standing straight and still, and standing in a horse stance—these are the most basic beginnings of martial arts training. Yet, like the first time we learned to hold the drumsticks, count 4/4, and play single strokes, they form a foundation from which to develop a world of movement, technique, and rhythm.

The martial artist focuses energy and moves his hands and feet in complex patterns of blocks, strikes, and kicks to repel or initiate an attack. The drummer focuses on the music and moves around the drumkit, propelling the band with a groove, punching up a horn riff, or embellishing a musical phrase with a flourish of cymbals.

Drumming and the martial arts have much in common—timing, balance, speed, power, independence, focus, and flow. According to Gichin Funakoshi, one of the great modern martial arts masters, "The ultimate aim of karate [martial arts] lies not in victory or defeat, but in the perfection of the character of its participants."

Drumming offers us the same path. It's a great form of self-expression, an athletic activity, and an intellectual pursuit all rolled into one. Our instrument affords us an avenue to channel large amounts of physical and mental energy. I hope that the ideas we discuss in this series will help you to channel that energy positively and constructively. After all, experimenting with one's instrument, learning, and growing are great joys of being a musician.

In the next article, we'll look at principles of power and motion. We'll explore how these relate to the popular "Moeller technique," and show how they can improve one's flow, control, and speed on the drums. Keep practicing.



Building Your Own Drumset

Part 3: Starting Construction

Story by Paul Bielewicz
Photos by Melissa Talma

In the previous two installments of this series we discussed the concepts involved in designing your own drumkit, and how to obtain the necessary components. This month, we'll look at some of the major construction processes.

Planning The Job

Before I could begin any work on my kit, I had to establish a logical construction sequence. Obviously, the raw shells would have to be drilled to accommodate the lugs and other fittings. But because I planned to cover my drums with a wrap finish, the holes would not only have to be drilled through the shells, but through the wrap as well. This made it necessary to wrap the drums first. Once the drums were wrapped, I could then drill the holes for the lugs, the bass drum spurs, the snare strainer, the air vents, and so on. After all those holes were drilled, most of the remaining job would be simply a matter of assembling the parts to the shells.

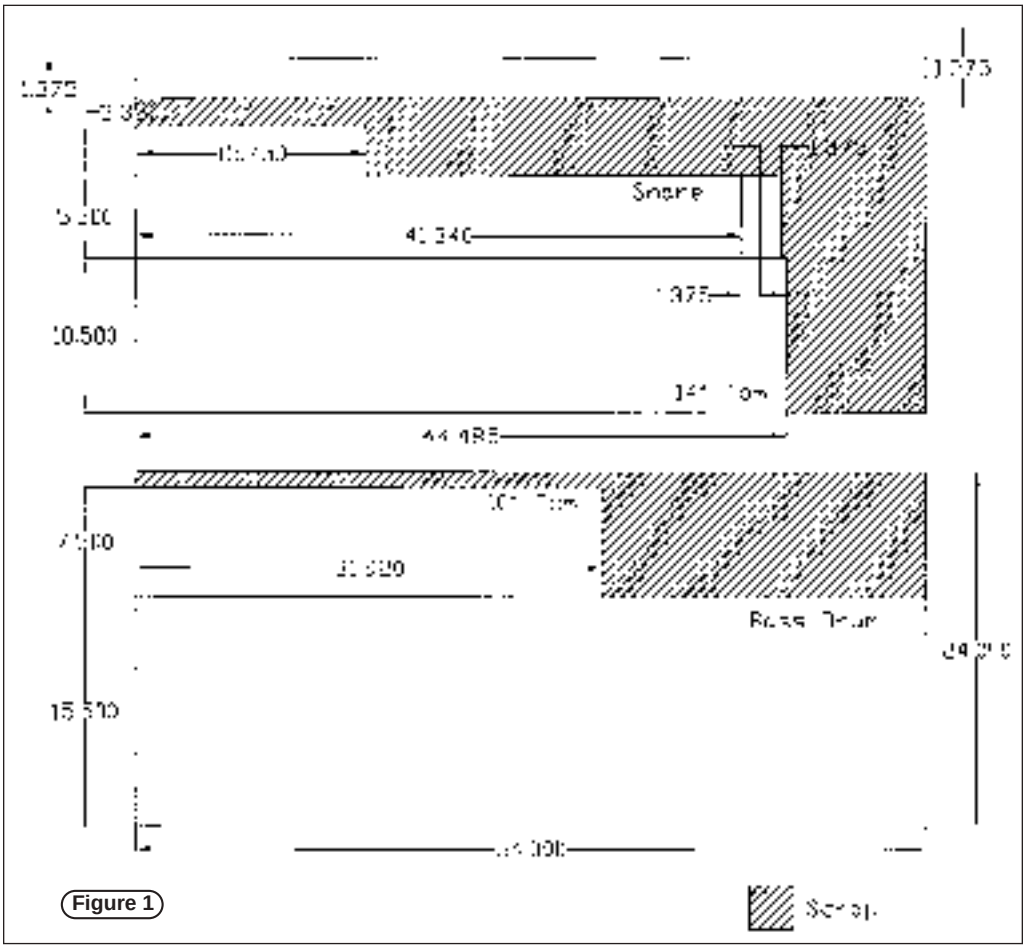


Figure 1

Determining Each Shell's Fundamental Pitch

Before I wrapped my shells, there was one additional step I wanted to take. Several years ago, Drum Workshop discovered that every raw drumshell has a fundamental pitch at which it vibrates naturally when struck. They believe that tuning the finished drum to this fundamental pitch greatly increases resonance and sustain. They call this process "timbre tuning." It makes a lot of sense to me, so I wanted to incorporate it into the construction of my kit.

To determine a shell's fundamental pitch, it must be tested *before* being wrapped or drilled. The standard way of doing this is to hold the inside of the shell loosely in one hand, supporting it from underneath, and striking it with the fist of the other hand. Doing this produces a musical tone. Determining the pitch of that tone can be done using a tuning fork, a keyboard, or a simple computer program. The pitches of the raw shells for my kit were as follows: 10" tom: A1 (110 Hz); 13" snare: G#1 (105.8 Hz); 14" tom: E flat1 (77.8 Hz); 18" kick: F0 (43.7 Hz).

Wrapping The Shells

Once I'd established the pitches of the shells (and marked those pitches inside each one), it was time to apply the plastic wrap. A preliminary layout sketch helped me determine the amount of wrap necessary. Note: This should be done before

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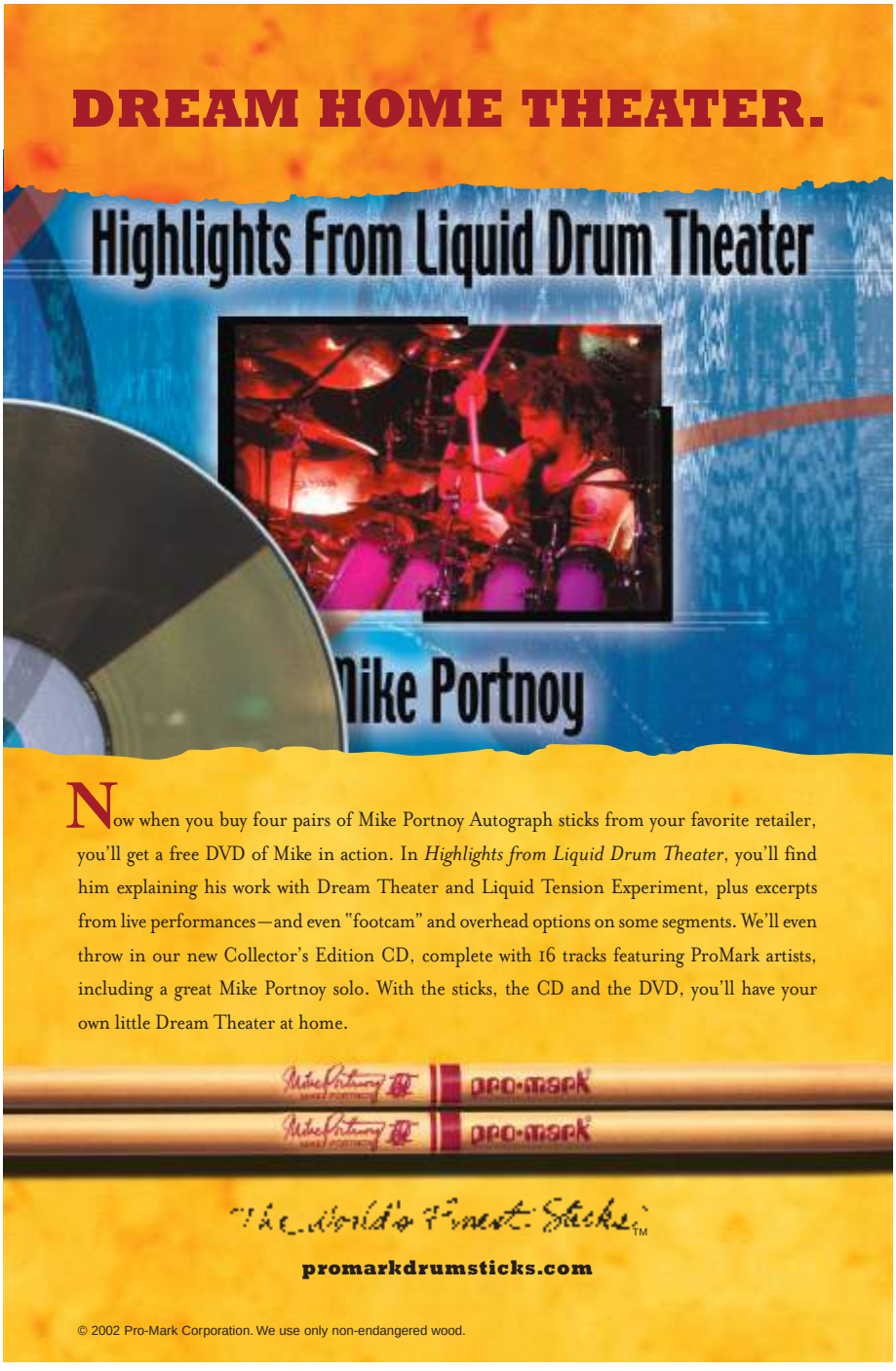
Shop Talk

ordering the wrap. Drum wrap comes in 54" x 24" rolls. In order to cover my entire kit, I needed two full rolls. The wrap was shipped with a removable thin plastic protective coating. I left this coating on to protect the surface of the wrap until the lugs were attached.

Calculating

Determining the amount of wrap necessary to cover a given drum can be done by applying a simple formula. Since the wrap needs to cover the entire circumference of a drum, that circumference needs to be determined. The circumference of a circle is πD, where π is the mathematical constant 3.1416, and D is the diameter of the drum. For example, on the 10" tom, the circumference is 3.1416 x 10 = 31.416". Since cutting the wrap *precisely* to this size wouldn't allow any overlap, I added an extra $\frac{1}{2}$", making it 31.916. Obviously, the wrap didn't need precision to the nearest thousandth of an inch, so I



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rounded off to the nearest tenth.

The vertical dimension of the wrap should not be the exact depth of the drum. For example, my 10" tom is 8" deep, but some of that 8" is taken up by the bearing edges, which should not be covered. It's important to allow enough bare shell for the head to contact as well. If the head is sitting in a position where it will cover the wrap, an artificial pinch point will be created, which will choke the resonance of the drum. To account for all this, I subtracted $\frac{1}{4}$" from each edge, for a total of $\frac{1}{2}$". Thus, for the 10" tom, the wrap was cut to 31.920" x $7\frac{1}{2}$". Using this formula, you can determine not only how much wrap to buy, but how best to lay out each piece so as not waste any material. (See figure 1 on page 124.)

Because the wrap comes standard in 24" x 54" sheets, a little quick math will show that one sheet will not entirely cover the bass drum or hoops. Therefore it will be necessary to patch in pieces to each, and to have two seams instead of one.

If you're not absolutely sure of your math (and even if you are), it's a good idea to create "patterns" out of paper, in the same way that sewing patterns are created. That way you can check your figures by actually "fitting" the paper coverings onto each drum. It's a lot cheaper to make a corrected set of paper patterns than it is to buy more plastic wrap.

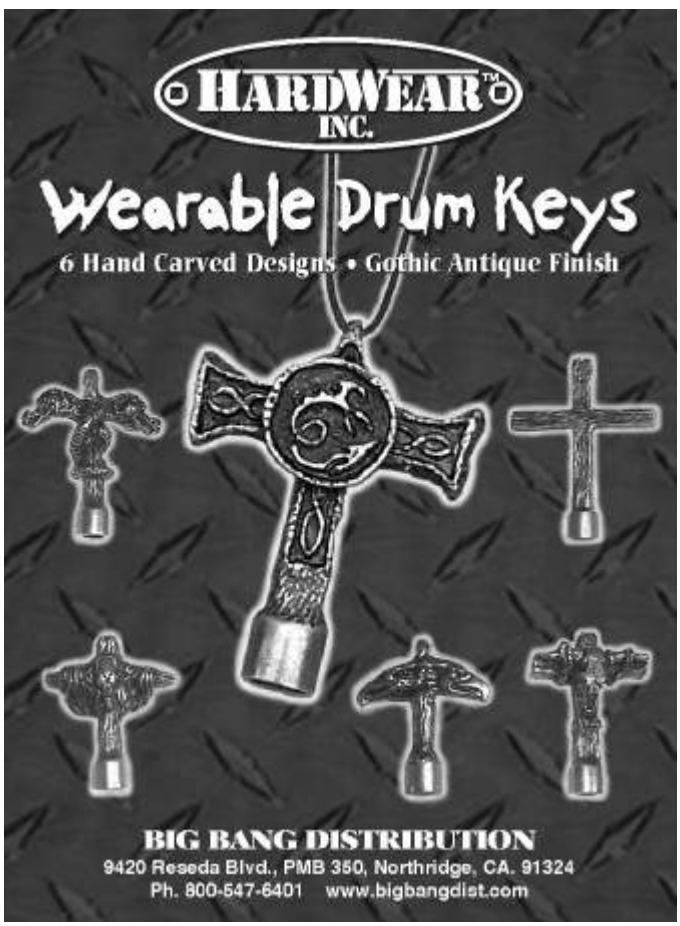
Cutting

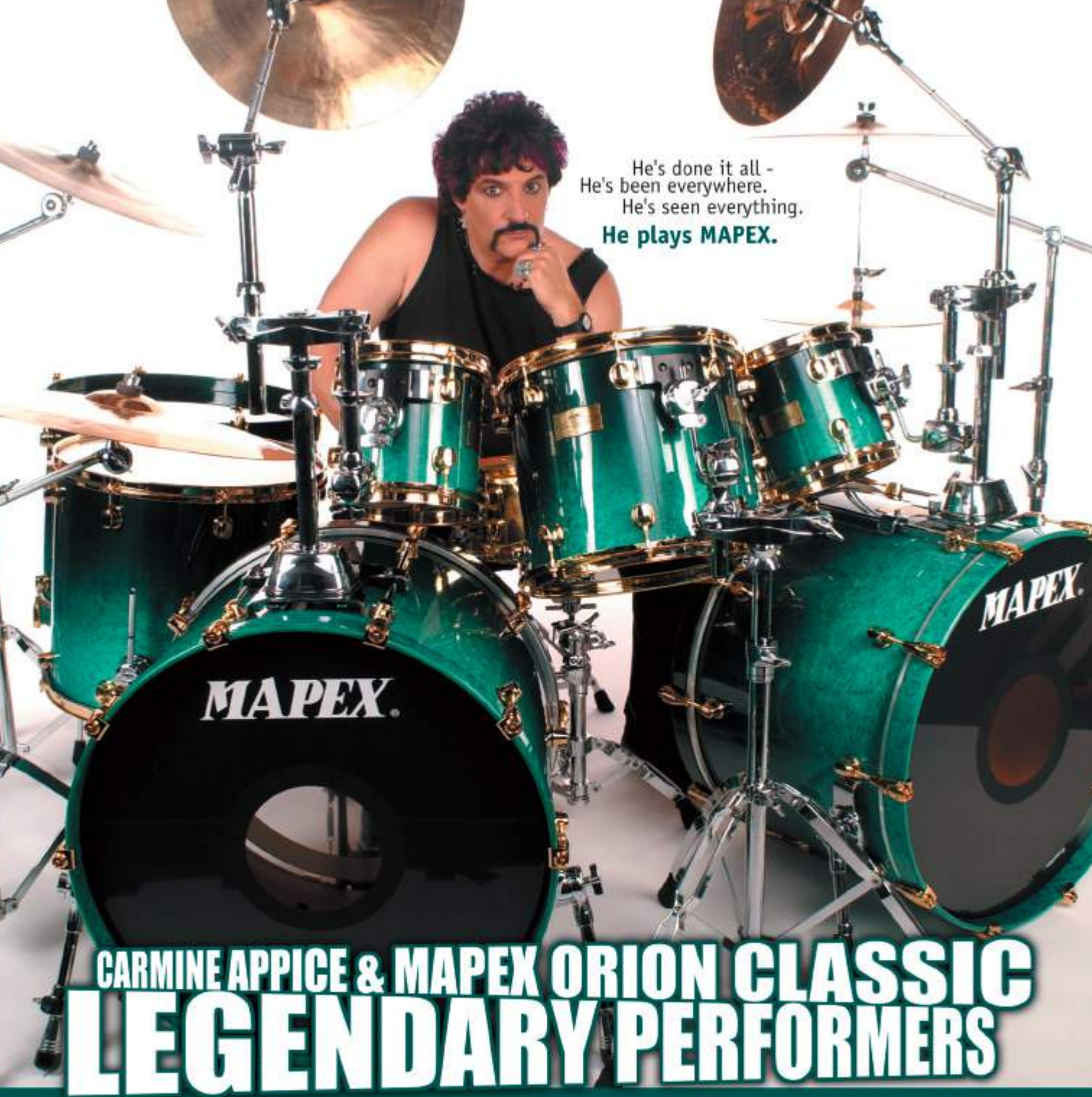
Once you have accurate dimensions for each drum, the wrap can be cut. Most wrap is only about $\frac{1}{32}$" thick, so it can be cut with heavy-duty scissors. The best way to do this is to turn the wrap upside down and lay out all the cut lines with a pencil. Using a T-square and/or a carpenter's square will ensure straight lines and 90º angles. You can also check your accuracy by laying on the paper patterns and comparing the dimensions. Once all the lines are drawn, the pieces can be cut.

Although all your cuts should be as straight as possible, small imperfections in the top and bottom edges will be inconsequential, since those edges will not be visible when the drumheads are on. It is important, however, that the seams be cut straight, since they will be visible on the finished drum. Where possible, try to use the pre-cut edges of the sheet for the visible seams.

Gluing

Before you apply your wrap, you need to decide whether you want the application to be permanent or not. Wrapping a drum non-permanently simply means that the wrap will be easy to remove at a later date. This is accomplished with double-sided tape applied in one or more areas of the drum. The advantage of this method is that it allows you to unwrap or re-wrap the drum for a change of look. The disadvantage is that the wrap is not bonded to the entire shell, so it can possibly shift and warp. Additionally, air can be trapped between the wrap and the drumshell, which can damp the resonance. For these reasons, I decided to use a permanent approach.





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Wrap is applied permanently using a bonding adhesive. The adhesive used most often is DAP Weldwood Contact Cement. This comes in a can, and is applied with a brush or roller. Once applied, a nearly instantaneous chemical bond is formed between the wrap and the shell, combining the two as one.

Before you apply the glue to any surface, it's important to read the directions and safety precautions on the can. Contact cement is quite flammable, and its vapors can escape and create a fire hazard. For this reason, I did all work involving the contact cement in my garage, away from the house and any potential sources of open flame, such as stoves and pilot lights. I also made sure that there was plenty of ventilation in my work area.

In order to get a proper bond, the contact adhesive must be applied to both surfaces being joined and allowed to dry. I assembled a makeshift table in the garage out of a sheet of plywood with some supports. I laid out the cut pieces of wrap, back side up, and placed the drumshells nearby. I poured the contact cement into a short, wide plastic container, then used a 4" foam brush to apply it uniformly to the back side of the wrap and the exterior of each drum shell. (See photos 1 and 2.) As per the instructions on the can of cement, the surfaces were allowed to dry for about fifteen minutes.

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After that time had passed, the surfaces were somewhat glossy and slightly tacky to the touch. It was then time to join them.

Applying The Wrap

Due to the nature of contact cement, once the surfaces touch each other, there's no going back. Therefore, I wanted to make sure everything was just right before I touched them together. I decided to start with the 10" tom, figuring that if I messed anything up beyond repair, this would be the least expensive shell to replace. (The photos show the same processes on other drums.)

I knew that the edge of the wrap needed to be ¼" from the top and bottom of each shell. In order to ensure this, I used a piece of scrap wood exactly ¼" thick as a guide. Holding the wrap vertically and sliding it over this guide (with the drumshell flat on the table), I positioned the wrap exactly ¼" above the bottom of the shell. (Photo 3.) Starting in an arbitrary spot on the first shell, I applied the wrap slowly, being careful to keep pressure and speed constant and not to allow any air bubbles to form between the wrap and the shell. Once the

(Top l-r)
Mike Shapiro
Ryan Cooper
Eddie Tuduri
Trieanna Moon
Seiko Niimi
Libby Whaley
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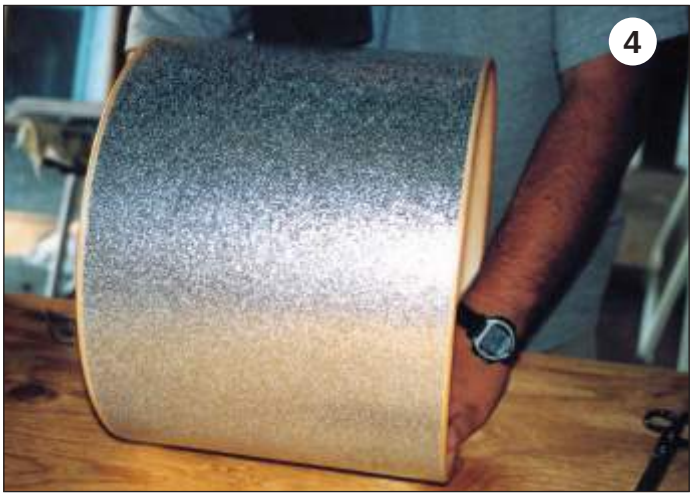


wrap was applied to the entire drum, I rolled the drum along the table, applying downward pressure to further eliminate any bubbles. (Photo 4.) Once the 10" tom was completed, I wrapped the other shells in the same manner.

On all drums except the snare, it doesn't really matter where along the shell the wrap is started. The seams can be concealed later when the lugs are attached. For the snare drum shell, however, it does matter exactly where you start the wrap. This will be explained in greater detail in the section on drilling in next month's issue.

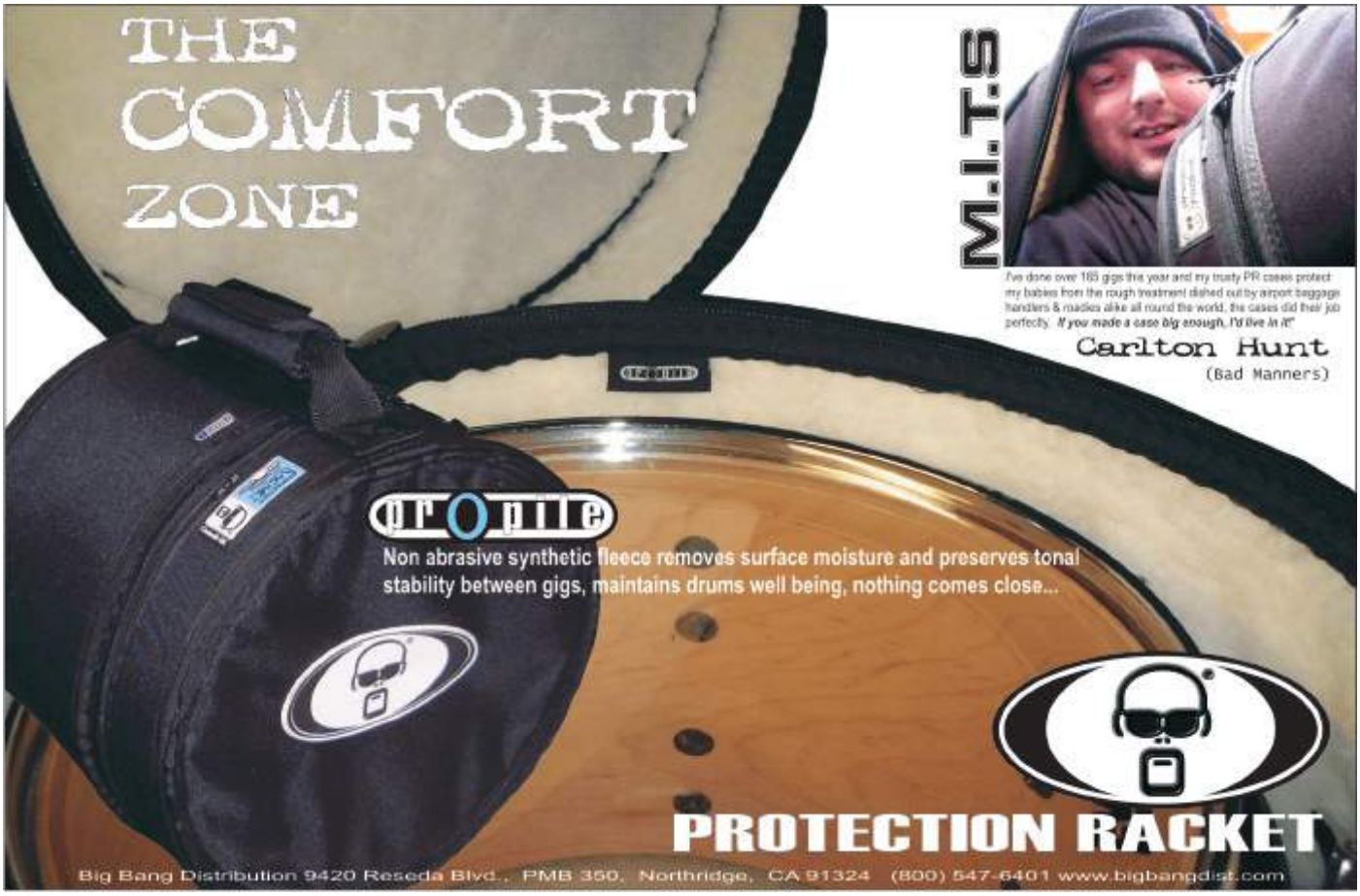
I didn't want the natural maple color of the bass drum hoops to show (in contrast to the silver and black color themes of the kit). Therefore, before I applied wrap strips to the hoops, I spray-painted them black using Rust-Oleum gloss black paint. After a few coats had been applied and dried, I secured the wrap to the hoops in the same manner as I had to the shells, except that I didn't inset them $\frac{1}{4}$" from the edge. Each strip was flush to the flat (inner) edge of the hoop and set back just a bit from the other edge to conform to its rounded nature.

Oops!

I had difficulty getting the larger pieces of wrap, like on the 14" tom and the bass drum, to line up perfectly. I'd get partway

around the drum, and find that the distance from the edge of the wrap to the top of the shell was much less than the distance to the bottom of the shell. This told me that the alignment of the wrap was slightly crooked.

As I stated earlier, the contact cement bonds nearly instantaneously. Fortunately, there is a *little* bit of leeway in that "instantaneous" nature. As long as I noticed a problem right away, I could pull off the



wrap and redo it. Once contact is made, I found that I had about thirty seconds to change my mind. After that point, trying to remove the wrap would most likely ruin the drum. The biggest problem I encountered was on the bass drum. I *did* make a mistake, I *didn't* notice it right away, and I *almost* ruined the drum.

As mentioned earlier, the bass drum required two pieces of wrap: one large one, and one small "patch" to close the 3" gap left by the larger piece. At first, I had intended to overlap this patch on both sides with the larger piece. So I glued the patch first (photo 5), followed by the larger piece. Later, however, I decided it might look better to stagger the seams—that is, to overlap the left side of the patch with the larger piece, and overlap the other end of the larger piece with the patch. But by the time I'd made this decision, the patch had been glued on for a few minutes already.

Trying to pull up a section of the patch just large enough to tuck a half-inch of the larger piece under it proved quite impossible. In fact, in my haste to pull up a small section of the patch, I ripped the thin plastic wrap and essentially ruined the patch. I knew that I'd either have to remove what was left of the patch or live with a ripped section of the wrap. Luckily, I had enough leftover wrap to make another patch, but removing the rest of the existing patch proved quite difficult.

After a few minutes of prying, tearing, and uttering a few choice expletives, I finally succeeded in pulling up the patch. The leftover glue underneath needed to be removed from the shell as well. I scraped it off, applied cement to the new patch I cut, reapplied it to the now-exposed surface of the drum, and after a few minutes to let the cement dry, reapplied the wrap, this time staggering the seams. The moral of this story is: Be *sure* of how you want to cover your drum before you do it. Once it's wrapped, it's wrapped. (Photo 6.)

Next month we'll finish up this series with a look at drilling the shells and assembling the drums. See you then!

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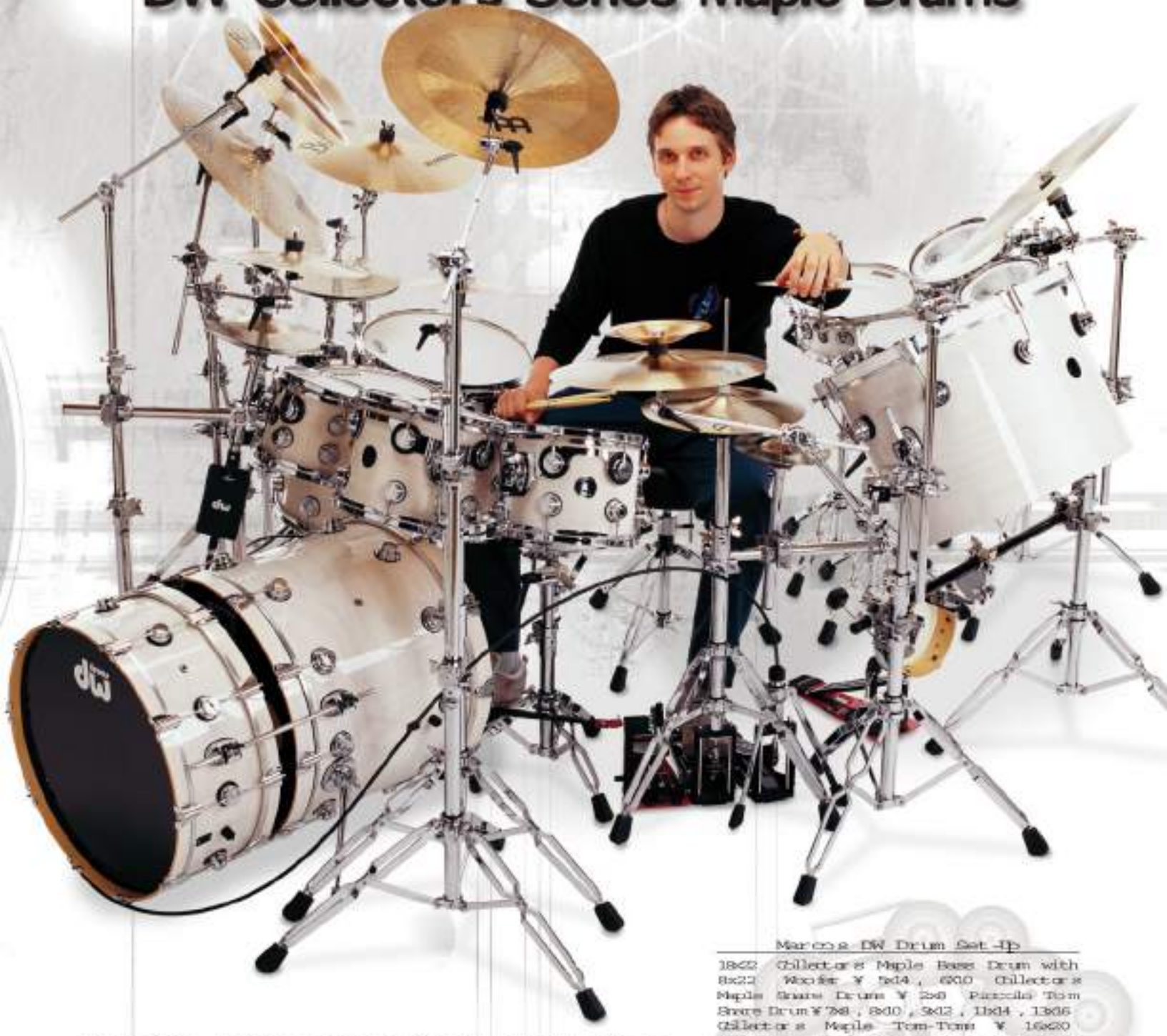

Much like another famous German import, Marco Minneman s reputation is built on speed, precision and power. His in-the-pocket playing behind artists like Paddy Kelly, Paul Gilbert, Illegal Aliens and Nena has grooved concert audiences while his awe-inspiring technique has thrilled drummers in clinics, videos and books. With an abundance of the talent and energy to fuel both his mainstream and extreme drumming performances, Marco may just be the Ultimate Drumming Machine.

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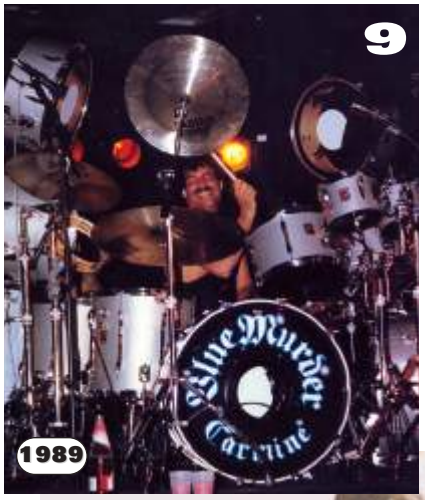
Carmine Appice

by Billy Amendola

One way or another, drum legend Carmine Appice (pronounced A-Peace) has been a major influence on just about every rock drummer of the past thirty years. From Vanilla Fudge in 1967 (Led Zeppelin was *their* opening act) to Cactus in '69, to Beck, Bogert & Appice in '72, to Rod Stewart in '78...the list of Carmine's influential gigs goes on for the next twenty-plus years.

To this day, not only as a performer, but also as an educator (he was one of the first to hold drum clinics), Carmine continues to influence a new generation of young players with revised editions of his book *Realistic Rock*. Written in 1970, *RR* has become one of the best-selling drum books of all time. Ensuring his popularity with future players, Carmine's new book/two-CD set, *Realistic Rock For Kids*, features a cartoon character "Carmine The Drummer."

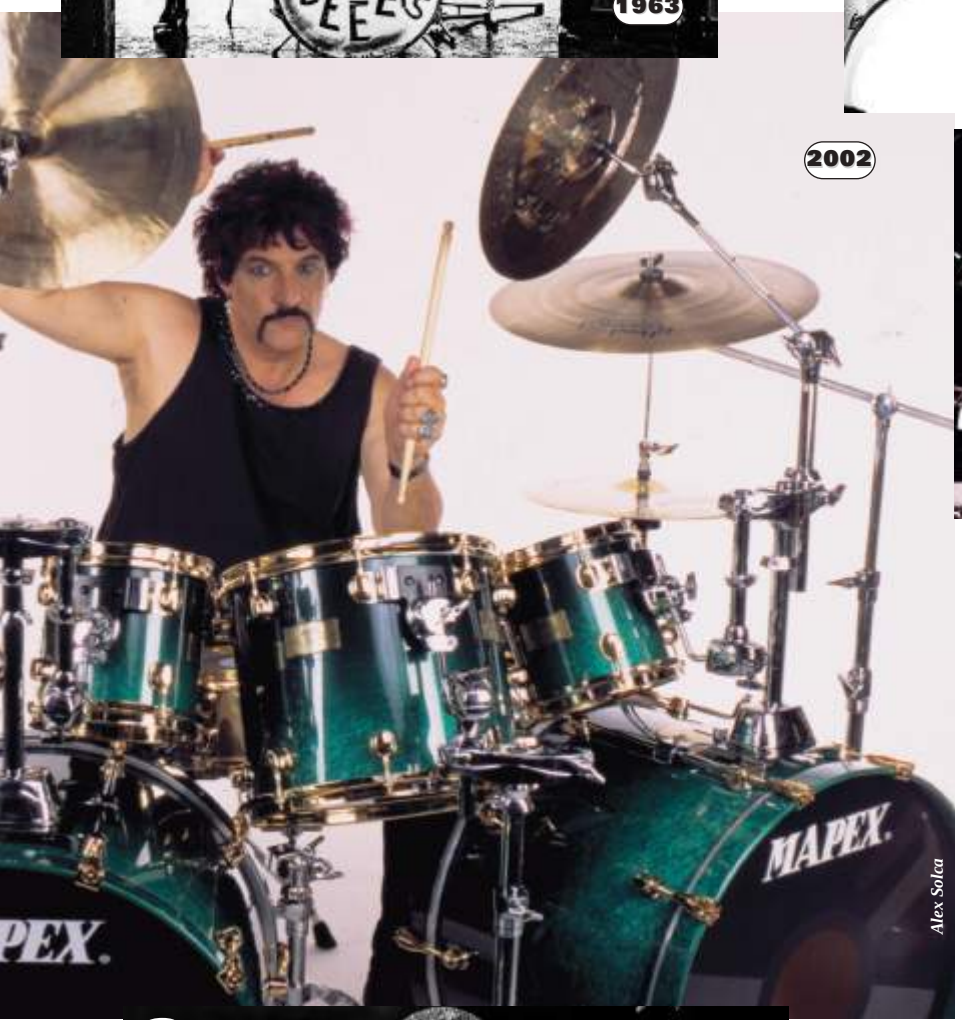
Through the years, as Carmine's bands changed or moved in different directions, so did his drumkits. He was one of the first drummers to have a "big kit," and was also an early experimenter with electronics. Let's travel through the years with Carmine The Drummer and his drumkits.



1 Publicity shot of Carmine in 1963, with his Gretsch kit and a Rodgers Dyna-Sonic snare. "That's the kit I used on the recording of The Fudge's 'You Keep Me Hangin' On.'" 2 Carmine with his Ludwig double bass kit in action with Vanilla Fudge on *The Ed Sullivan Show*, January 1969. "I got that kit in June of '68." 3 "The Big Kit." In the days of Cactus and Beck, Bogert & Appice, 1972-73, Carmine used this Ludwig single-headed Octa-Plus kit. Paiste supplied the massive metal. 4 Carmine (now back to double-headed toms) playing a Ludwig stainless-steel kit in 1976, on tour with Rod Stewart. "I only used this kit for that one tour." 5 Carmine & Joe Pollard (left) experimenting with an early Syndrum prototype in 1977. It was later incorporated in Carmine's acoustic drum setup. 6 The Ludwig "Realistic Rock" kit Carmine used in '78 and '79, and with Rick Derringer in 1982. Note the Syndrums inside the two small tom shells. 7 Carmine with his Slingerland kit on tour with Ozzy Osbourne in 1984. 8 Carmine with his Pearl kit, on tour with King Kobra, circa '84. 9 Carmine with his Sabian signature China cymbal and Premier drumkit, on tour with Blue Murder in 1989. 10 Carmine with his new Mapex kit.

1
THE 3 BEES
1963

2
1969
Charles Stewart


2002
MAPEX.
Alex Solca

1972
3
Carmine

4
Carmine
1976

6
1982
Carmine
Ebet Roberts

5
1977
Richard Schumacher

Kenneth Schalk

a New Fusion Is Born

by Mike Haid

What do KISS and The Chick Corea Elektric Band have in common? Probably nothing…until now. These are but two of the diverse influences that make Candiria drummer/composer Kenneth Schalk a groundbreaking pioneer in the loud-rock music world.

Candiria is creating quite a buzz with its unique blend of metal, hip-hop, rap, jazz, and ambient styles. Even though the band made *Rolling Stone* magazine's list of "Ten Best Metal Bands," they're *so* much more than metal. In the course of a Candiria CD, you'll be thrown into a progressive barrage with death metal vocals, then suddenly the music will shift gears into a total hip-hop/rap vibe, and *then* slide smoothly into a loping electric jazz piece with trumpet and electric keys. Drummer Schalk impressively handles each style with ease and conviction.

Schalk also handles much of the Brooklyn, New York band's writing and engineering, and plays a variety of instruments, including keyboards and trumpet. If you thought Dream Theater was pushing the boundaries of progressive metal, then you need to give Candiria a listen.

"a drummer should work toward having physical, mental, spiritual, and *scientific* command over his body and drumset."

MD: How did the band first come up with the idea to blend metal, hip-hop, and jazz? And what type of musical and creative statement was the band looking to create?

Kenneth: From our conception, it was the goal to bring the essence of groove and dance into the forum of metal through as many of our musical influences as we could. Creatively, we were seeking a way to redefine the genre we were living, by not only blending other genres, but also by abandoning anything close to formula songwriting and arrangement.

MD: Did these styles fall together easily, or did it take some time to fine-tune the concept?

Kenneth: When the band came together, we all had our strengths and weaknesses with each musical style. The common goal was evolution. We're still evolving, like all passionate artists do. We've been together for ten and a half years now and have all come a long way. As long as we're together, we'll always be fine-tuning, de-tuning, twisting, bending, and manipulating in as many ways as possible.

MD: What's your drumming background?

Kenneth: I've been listening to music since I was a small child. I was always known to be tapping my feet and hands or

banging pencils and pens in school. I had relatives with pianos, and my father played a little ukulele and banjo. I loved the music of the ’70s, because in my opinion ’70s music was the most advanced generation of music to come along. As a kid, I listened to anything that was recorded up to the ’70s.

My grandparents had 78-rpm vinyl records that I loved as well. I’d be listening to songs like “The Wayward Wind” and then slow down the record player to 33 rpm so I could listen to *Kiss Alive II*. All of the different music I listened to, along with the music that my parents listened to, got absorbed into my brain and definitely had an overall impact on me as a musician.

My first drumming influence was Animal from *The Muppet Show*, which in turn led to my hearing Buddy Rich, because Buddy had a drum battle with Animal on one episode. When I did start playing drumset at thirteen years old, I was mostly listening to rock stations that played bands like AC/DC, The Rolling Stones, and Led Zeppelin. Drummers like John Bonham, Keith Moon, and Alex Van Halen became big influences. Simultaneously I was listening to rap music, in its much earlier stages.

I played on my own for a couple of years with rock and rap as my foundation, and then I decided it was worth it for me to take lessons for proper development and technique. My teacher was Pete Pizzi from Staten Island, and he gave me some great exercises and fun stories, and opened me up to a whole new world I hadn’t known about before.

It was at that point that I started buying *Modern Drummer* magazine and digging deeper into the world of drums. I was hooked. My influences on the rock side had gotten heavier and heavier—guys like Dave Lombardo—but I was also starting

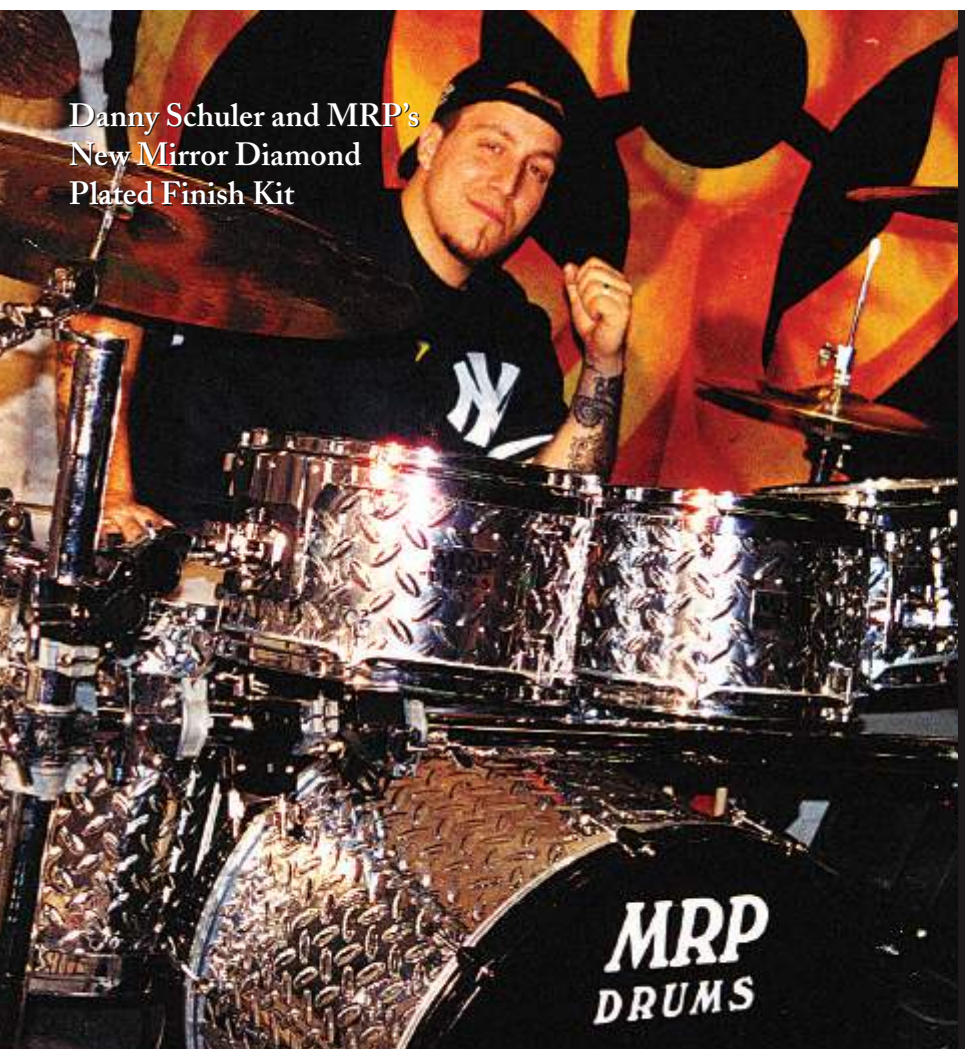
Candiria Kicks

Schalk On Applying Double Bass

“I played two kick drums when I was younger,” Kenneth Schalk says, “but I switched over to double pedal about eight years ago. Every album has double bass on it. I love double bass, but I played it out when I was younger.

“I grew up listening to Dave Lombardo,” Schalk continues, “when everyone was out to have the fastest feet in the world. I exercise my feet daily to keep them in shape, but I don’t play double bass as extensively in songs as I used to. I’ve been more selective about it in the past few years. I’ve learned about impression through impact instead of impression through impressiveness.”

Lance Hammond



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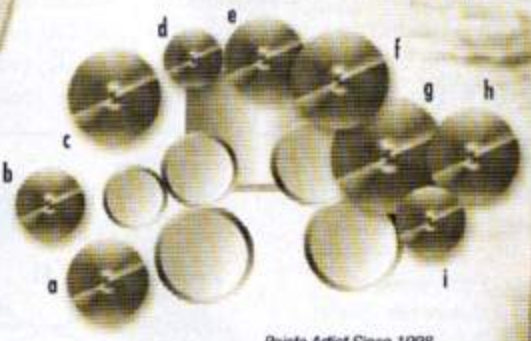

a – 14" Signature Heavy Hi-Hats
b – 12" Signature Splash
c – 16" Signature Full Crash
d – 10" Signature Splash
e – 14" Signature Full Crash
f – 17" Signature Full Crash
g – 20" Signature Dark Full Ride (Custom)
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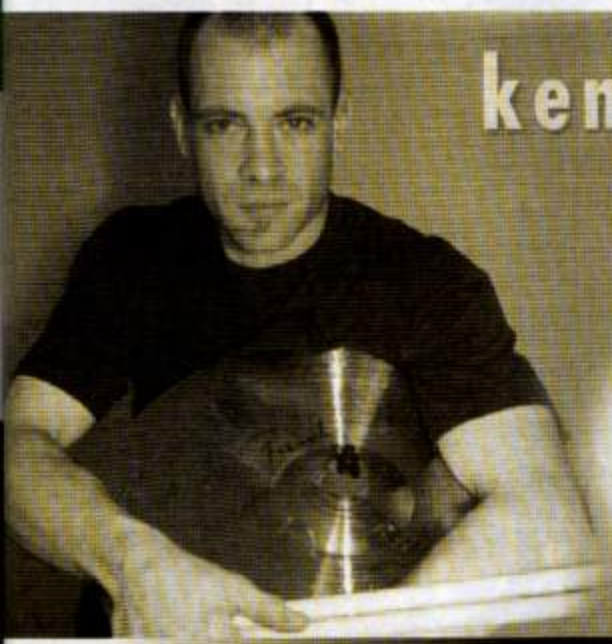

kenneth Schalk

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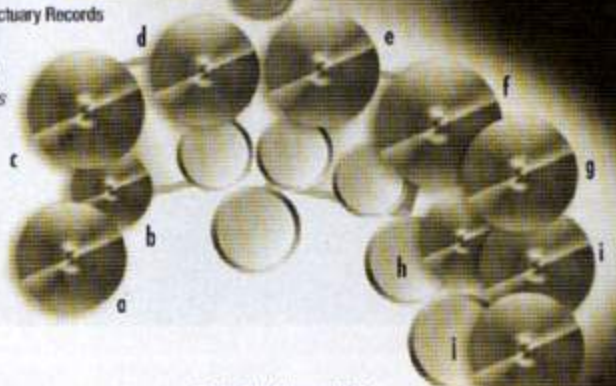


a – 20" 2002 Power Crash (Custom)
b – 14" Signature Sound Edge Hi-Hats
c – 20" Signature Power Crash
d – 20" Signature Power Crash
e – 20" Signature Full Crash
f – 22" Signature Power Ride
g – 20" Signature Dry Ride
h – 15" 2002 Sound Edge Hi-Hats
i – 19" Signature Power Crash
j – 20" Signature Heavy China

Paiste Artist Since 1999

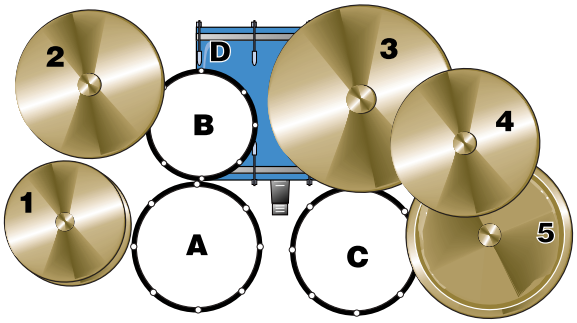
to listen to drummers like Dave Weckl and Steve Gadd. In fact, I was turned on to Weckl because of *Modern Drummer*. There was a sound-supplement record you could cut out of the mag and play on your turntable. I heard the song "Spur Of The Moment" and said to myself, "I've *got* to learn how to play like this guy."

So it was speed metal and fusion driving me through most of the '80s. In the '90s, I started exploring Frank Zappa and jazz on a very serious level, and I never looked back. Frank Zappa is absolutely incredible. But without a doubt, jazz is the ultimate music for me. I really dug Joe Chambers. That guy is one of the best jazz drummers, and no one really knows about him. And Billy Higgins, Art Blakey, and Elvin Jones were making things clear to me. I always wanted to play jazz, and when I started listening to these cats play, I knew I had to get into it. So when I entered Candiria, I was at a point in my life where bringing jazz/fusion into balance with heavy music became a goal.

MD: You also play other instruments, like keyboards and trumpet. How has that helped in your playing and songwriting technique?

Kenneth: Playing other instruments allows you to understand how a song is felt from that instrument's perspective. Each instrument has its own personality that will inspire things that other instruments won't. Becoming aware of this and learning about it puts you that much more in touch with songwriting and arranging, as well as producing. It has definitely changed the way I think about the drumset and its role in the song. I've been writing music and playing other instruments for quite some time. The more I write, the

Schalk's Set



Drums: Tama Starclassic
- **A.** 5½x14 snare (maple)
- **B.** 9x12 tom (birch)
- **C.** 11x14 floor tom (birch)
- **D.** 16x20 bass drum (maple)

Cymbals: Paiste
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2. 18" Signature power crash
3. 22" Signature full ride
4. 18" Signature power crash
5. 20" 2002 Novo China

Hardware: All Tama stands, including an Iron Cobra Power Glide double pedal and Lever Glide hi-hat stand

Heads: Remo coated kevlar on snare batter with Ambassador snare-side head, coated Emperors on tops of toms with clear Pinstripes on bottoms, clear PowerStroke 3 on bass drum batter with Ebony PowerStroke 3 on front with 8" hole in center

Sticks: Vic Firth American Classic Rock model (hickory with wood tip)

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more I put into my library of ideas, concepts, and formulas.

MD: With such a diverse blend of styles, what type of audience does the band seem to attract? Does any one style seem to generate a stronger response from the audience?

Kenneth: Candiria is a heavy, loud rock band. Naturally, the majority of our audience is anywhere between sixteen and twenty-five years old. But we also have fans between twenty-five and sixty years old. I've seen them and talked with them. They love the diversity. Young and old, they all like to rock out and enjoy a diverse array of musical atmospheres.

MD: The song "Peel This Strip And Fold Here" is a total jazz tune. Your drumming starts off reminiscent of what Dave Weckl was doing with The Chick Corea Elektric Band. How do you pull this off live without the horns and keys?

Kenneth: Good call on the influence. The beat was inspired by a groove that Weckl played on a song called "Illusions" from The Elektric Band's *Beneath The Mask* LP. That particular song actually doesn't get played live. With our current situation, we haven't really started incorporating the instrumental side into our live shows yet. We do improvise freely at the end of our live set for about ten minutes, but none of the written instrumentals are performed live.

MD: You've got the muscle to slam the metal, as well as the loose feel for hip-hop and jazz. How have you developed each of these styles so fluently?

Kenneth: This could really become a lengthy answer, but I'll just say quickly that a drummer should work toward having physical, mental, spiritual, and *scientific* command over his body and drumset. When you really start to experience a good level of each of these aspects, the drumming becomes that much more fluent and comfortable. Being born with the natural passion for rhythm helped greatly. Even though I didn't start playing the drumkit until I was thirteen, I was enthused by music and drums since I was a small child.

MD: The soundscape tunes such as "Opposing Meter" and "R.Evolutionize.R" add a completely other dimension to the band—almost a prog-rock vibe. How does this fit into the musical scheme of the band?

Kenneth: "R.Evolutionize.R" is similar to the vibe we create in our improvised jams at the end of our live shows. "Opposing Meter" is more electronic and experimental. They both work with our musical scheme because the albums are always laid out as dynamic and eclectic journeys.

MD: You're displaying some serious technique on "Paradigm Shift," which opens the new release, *The Coma Imprint*. It sounds like Dream Theater meets Zappa with hip-hop and metal all rolled into one. How much time does the band spend working on these complex arrangements?

Kenneth: That song was written back in 1996. I couldn't accurately tell you how long it took, but in general, Candiria songs could take anywhere from one week to a few months to write. Because of the nature of writing a constantly evolving song, many transitions and arrangement ideas have to be worked out.

Songs that are structured like these can be inspired by many things, and at times might get started without a beginning. We've written songs from the middle to

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Kenneth Schalk

the end and added a beginning later on. We've rewritten beginnings after writing other parts. We've taken parts out that were in the song for a month because we realized they were weakening the flow. There are so many things to analyze, you really have to be able to step outside and observe it from the listener's perspective to get the message across most effectively. As we write and develop each song, it's analyzed and manipulated until it goes to tape.

MD: You incorporate a nice blend of percussion into your music. Have you studied percussion?

Kenneth: I've hung out with people who studied percussion and picked up some tips. My learning is mostly by listening and watching others. Then, depending on what I wanted to learn, it could have been either trial-and-error or immediate understanding. I love percussion, and I enjoy the vast array of sounds from around the world. I'll be collecting instruments and learning for years to come.

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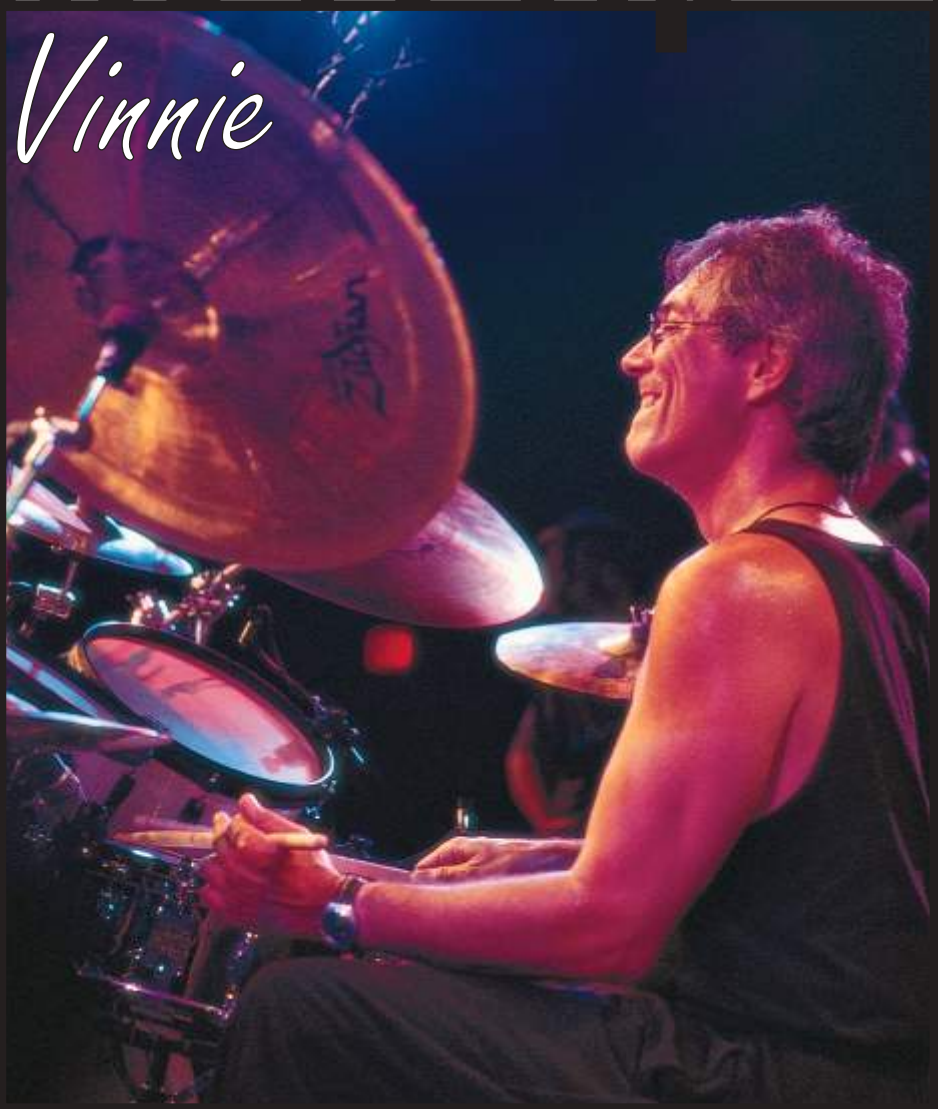
— Vinnie Colaiuta



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Realities

It Ain't All Fun And Games

by Andy James

For most drummers, the sequence of their recording experience goes something like this: It starts with a boom box and a couple of cheap microphones. As time goes on, they find themselves in a band, with everyone pitching in money to buy a 4- or 8-track recorder so the band can cut a demo. When the band starts playing out and making some money, the next step is often to go into a friend's recording studio to cut a "real demo." If and when the band breaks up, the drummer tries to find studio work, on the basis of having "numerous recording sessions" under his belt.

This is exactly the progression that I followed in my early days. I was living in New York City at the time. I had tracked a *ton* of demos, from amateur 4-track to professional 48-track versions. Naturally I thought, "That's it, I'm a session guy. New York studios watch out, because here I come!"

You're not just there to play drums. You're also there to interpret people's desires, to read minds, to create musical magic...and to levitate if asked.

After all, I'd never had any big problems playing in the studio. I'd never really fallen off the click *that* badly. I was always happy with what I had recorded. *My* drums…*my* parts...*my* groove...everything was great.

Reality Bites

Then I started getting calls to do session work. Let me tell you, there's a world of difference between recording sessions paid for by you or your band and sessions that someone *else* is paying for. Having a third party paying you to play drums very simply means this: *Your* drums do not matter, *your* parts do not matter, and *your* opinions do not matter. You are there to do as you are told and get

the job done. And I stress *job*, because at this point in your career, as in my case, you have just switched from "Andy the drummer" to "Andy, the guy who drums for a living."

I'm not going to tell you that being a session player is harder than any other gig you might have. But it *is* an entirely different world—one that you should be ready for if that's the path you decide to take. When you claim to be a session player, you're saying to the studio world, "I'm a professional drummer. I get paid to do this." You're a tool for use by studio engineers, producers, and clients.

If you were hiring someone to paint your house, would you really care if he could paint with three brushes in each hand, upside down, while singing "Little Deuce Coupe"? Nope. All you'd want is for your house to be painted in a professional and timely manner. After all, you hired this guy to paint, and he is a *professional*. It's the same thing in the studio.

Beyond The Drums

Being a studio player calls for the most finely tuned "people skills" you can possibly imagine. You're not just there to play drums. You're also there to interpret people's desires, to read minds, to create musical magic...and to levitate if asked. Okay, I'm kidding about the levitating thing. But you *will* be expected to perform in a studio you've never seen before and that sounds different from what you're used to.

In addition, most studios have their own drumsets that they feel sound best for the room. You'll be forced to play these drums in an attempt to save someone set-up time and money. (Even if your drums sound better, save your breath. You'll be using the studio kit.) Playing on drums, heads, and cymbals that you have never used before adds to the stress of a studio gig. But it does make life interesting.

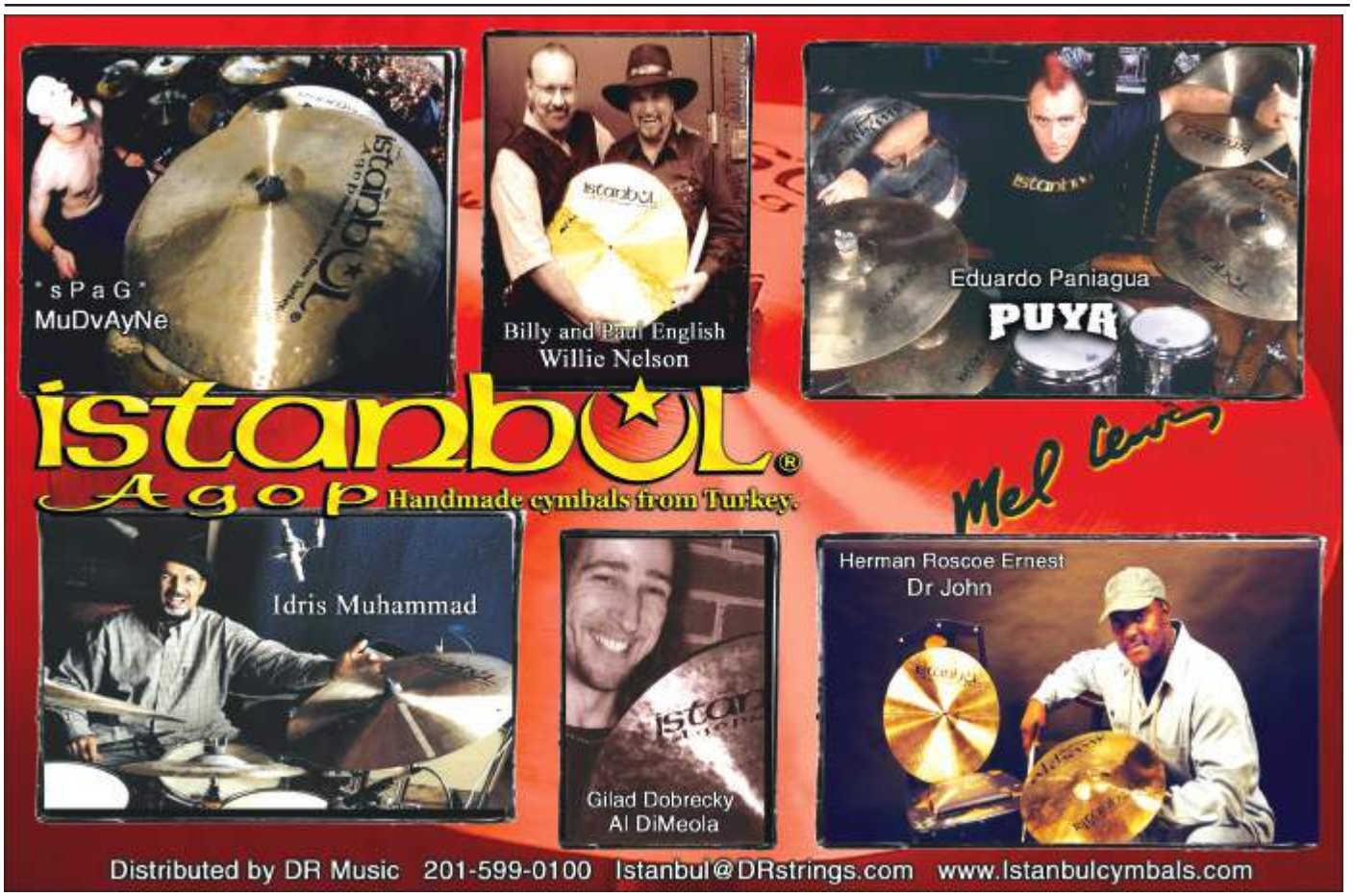
On top of all this change—which can make you uneasy to say the least—you have to play for people who don't know you, have no relationship with you, and couldn't care less if they hurt your feelings or not. It is now your job to interpret statements like, "I want the drums to sound more fluffy"…"Can you make the cymbal thingies sound more like the ocean?"…Or, "It sounds too blue. Make it sound more like red." These are all real-life examples of instructions given to me and to numerous other session players I know.

Your first instinct is to say, "*Fluffy*? What in the world are you talking about?" But if you take that route, there's a very good chance you'll never work for this person again. So instead, you have to sit back, bite your tongue, try to perceive what is desired, and say, "No problem. How does this sound?"

Personally I *love* the studio. I love making myself lock to a click so tightly that there is no room for argument. I love getting frustrated at someone, not being able to vent—and then playing better and more focused than ever. There's a delicate mix of professionalism and self-control that needs to be blended with your talent if you really want to make the studio your second home. You need to keep your mind and your heart focused on that mix at all times.

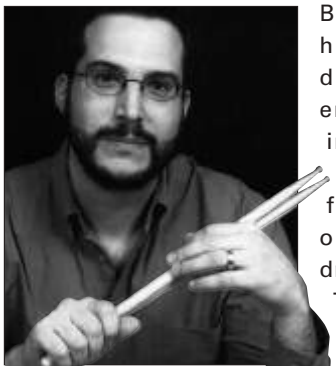
And while you're at it, can you make that second chorus a little fluffier for me?

Andy James has toured with Savatage, The Zeros and David Sweet. Since 1998 he's been a busy session drummer in Southern California, Seattle, and Miami.



Steve DeLuca

Glen Ridge, New Jersey's Steve DeLuca is a multi-faceted performer. Besides having been a drummer since childhood, Steve also plays piano and composes. And although he cites John Bonham as his first big drum influence, he fell in love with jazz and fusion early on. The drumming of Tony Williams, Bill Bruford, and Billy Cobham was the bridge that led Steve to the music of Miles, Coltrane, and Monk, and to the drumming of Elvin Jones and Art Blakey.



With this diverse background, it's little wonder that Steve's career has been equally varied. After graduating from Temple University with a degree in jazz performance, he performed and taught in the Philadelphia area for several years. A move to the NYC area led to Wooster Sang, a funk/rock/fusion outfit that had some recording and touring success in the Northeast in the late '90s.

Steve currently divides his time between Band Of Gold (a club date band playing the wedding/party circuit) and his own jazz trio. Band Of Gold plays eighty to ninety gigs per year, and Steve's trio has enjoyed success in jazz clubs including Montclair, New Jersey's prestigious Trumpets. Steve plays a Pearl Masters Custom kit with Band Of Gold, and a Gretsch Broadkaster kit for jazz gigs. Yamaha snare drums and K Zildjian cymbals complete the kits.

Says Steve, "I want to keep improving as a drummer and composer, and I'd like to get into session work. But I'm realizing my most important goal right now: making a living for myself and my family doing something I love. I couldn't ask for more."

Robert Pimental

Robert Pimental has been playing drums for twenty of his twenty-nine years. The Middleboro, Massachusetts drummer says his formal training was limited to "a brief but effective six-month period with John Varao of Plymouth," but that he has since maintained "a personal training routine that concentrates on theory, technical ability, creativity, and emotional playing." To this end, Robert cites Deen Castronovo, Dave Weckl, Vinnie Colaiuta, and Dave DiCenso as influences. "My main priority," says Robert, "is defining and establishing my own distinctive voice, which I intend to be a true expression of myself."

Robert is currently expressing himself several times a week with Knuckle Sandwich and Mixed Nuts, two bands playing the Massachusetts shore. He also teaches drums and piano to students ranging from eight to fifty years in age, and does local session drumming. Adds Robert, "I'm focusing on taking my career to the next level by working with more original projects and auditioning for national acts."

Robert's demo material shows him to be a versatile and creative player, with plenty of chops and a solid sense of groove. An original tune also displays his skill as a composer. Robert performs on a Noble & Cooley CD Maple kit, with Zildjian and Sabian cymbals, Yamaha hardware, and DW pedals.

Luciano Vignola

It's not unusual for a successful band to have a drummer who's been playing since the age of five. It *is* unusual for that drummer to be only eleven *now*.

Sayville, New York's Luciano Vignola is the percussive foundation for Vignola, a trio that also features Luciano's brother Rocco on guitar, violin, percussion, and vocals, and their sister Olivia on keyboards and vocals. The band composes and performs contemporary pop/rock and inspirational music. Luciano provides a solid groove and a great feel for his siblings to build on.

However, when it comes to soloing—something he's *very* good at—Luciano's personal style leans more toward big band drumming. That's not surprising, considering that he cites Gene Krupa, Buddy Rich, and Les DeMerle as influences. (Luciano has even performed with DeMerle's group.)

Luciano's technique and showmanship have earned him awards from a variety of music competitions. But he's happiest when performing before an audience. He and the rest of Vignola have already performed at various talent shows, benefits, corporate parties, and churches. They've also appeared at New York's Apollo theater, and they have a self-produced eponymous CD to their credit. (Contact vignolaorl@msn.com for more information.)

Besides sharing success as a member of Vignola, Luciano's personal goal is to become a first-call touring and recording drummer. He plays a double bass Pearl Masters kit with Zildjian cymbals.

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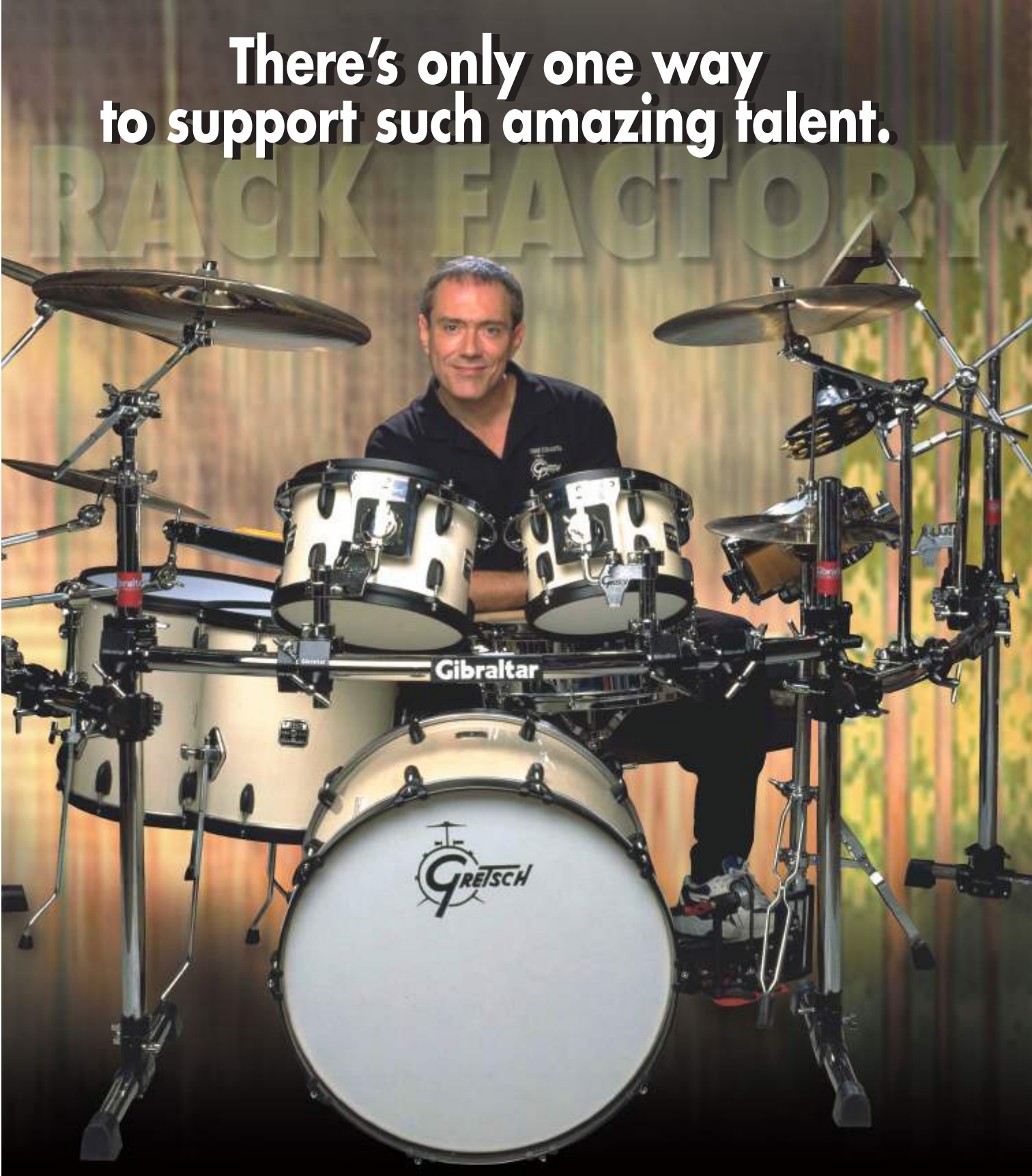

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RECORDINGS

rating scale

poor 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 classic

7 Phish Live Vols. 6-12 (Elektra)

8 Trey Anastasio Trey Anastasio (Elektra)

6 Page McConnell Vida Blue (Elektra)

The members of Phish are giving fans plenty of distraction to help them survive their favorite band's indefinite hiatus. First, there was Oysterhead, a sort of glorified side project for guitarist Trey Anastasio and rocker pals Stewart Copeland and Les Claypool. Now two of the Phish guys have formed honest-to-goodness *bands*—more, they assure us, than stand-ins to kill time before the much-craved reunion tour.

Some diehards are already hailing performances by Anastasio's new group as more potent than Phish shows. (Brings to mind the old hippie saying, "There's only one thing better than The Dead: Jerry Band.") Who knows, but Trey's self-titled LP certainly rocks. He's said King Sunny Ade and Fela Kuti's big bands inspired his nine-member Vermonter collective. But the group's sound is closer to Santana's horn & percussion–laced guitar rock. **RUSS LAWTON**, called upon to play Rock Beats A-Z, makes a perfect first impression. He hits everything—from gentle cross-sticks to fiery Latin patterns—with minimal flash and great feel, and his amazing groove on "Money, Love and Change" will leave drummers scrambling to figure it out. **CYRO BAPTISTA** chimes in with a worldly array of percussion.

Phish keyboardist Page McConnell's new *Vida Blue* has a decidedly smaller scope. It's an oddly paced record where vocal ballads try to coexist with dance-oriented instrumental material. Phish never had a problem turning on a dime, but Vida Blue does it less successfully. Maybe it's because some of the tunes sound unfinished, like there's a unifying layer of melody that needs to be added. Still, McConnell earns points for departing considerably from his role in Phish, mostly by trying new synth sounds and techno textures. **RUSSELL BATISTE** of The Funky Meters puts in a solid, funky performance, working the famed upbeat-hi-hat disco groove quite a bit.

And then there's *Live Phish* vols. 6-12—sorta like your dusty old tapes, only with better sound quality. The diversity of material in this semiannual series shows **JON FISHMAN**'s wonderful lack of musical boundaries, and the career-spanning selections allow you to track his development. Jams become less searing and more atmospheric as time goes by; steadier grooves replace frenetic movement as Phish grows more "professional," if not necessarily more exciting. Some fans think Fishman lost a little magic when he began playing less melodically and focused on stripped-down funk—and it's true that his kooky beats and acute listening skills hold more delights than his 2-and-4 patterns. But you have to applaud the deepening of his pocket over time. **Michael Parillo**

KICKIN' OUT THE NEW

Big and beautiful is what comes to mind when listening to **ART THOMPSON** and **JEN LOWE** of Acres. On *Pet Rocks* both drummer and percussionist show an amazing sense of groove as well as a mosaic of loops and, as they put it, "strange noises." Sticking to the pop-rock format, these two timekeepers never let the excitement level fall below pure joy. (Dragonfly Records)

Ultimate Fakebook's **NICK COLBY** is the type of drummer who makes you check the tuning of your drumheads after he uses your kit for the gig. On *Open Up And Say Awesome* Colby is in your face, playing heavy 8th-note floor tom beats and syncopated crashes while constantly moving around the kit. Snare and kick are not just for holding down the 2 and 4 'round these parts. (Initial Records)

Ladies and gentlemen, welcome to unadulterated rock 'n' soul. On The Jon Spencer Blues Explosion's latest, *Plastic Fang*, **RUSSELL SIMINS** once again proves himself a master of high-energy snare and kick. Whether it's a slow-tempo backbeat or an uptempo push, each new track is guaranteed to move you from deep down in your gut. Using nothing more than a simple kit and some hand toys, Simins has got to love what he does, because he does it so well. (Matador) **Fran Azzarto**

6 Green Day Shenanigans (Warner Bros./Reprise)

Although better recognized for his antics (losing toes from falling cymbals, setting his Slingerlands ablaze) than his actual performances, **TRÉ COOL**'s playing has dramatically improved over the last decade, which was gorgeously captured on 2000's *Warning*. Their latest, *Shenanigans*, is a B-sides/rarities comp that spans the act's entire Reprise career, sometimes harking back to those earlier periods when Tré was less inventive and consistent. While "DUI" is a hilarious polka cut and "Scumbag" is a fiery, bouncy pop-punk track, covers like The Ramones' "Outsider" and The Kinks' "Tired Of Waiting" are average at best and don't do the collection much justice. **Waleed Rashidi**

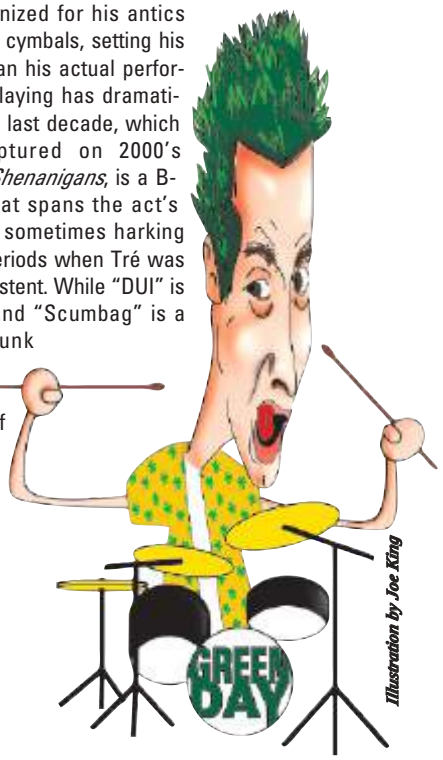


Illustration by Joe King

CHUTZPAH COUNTS

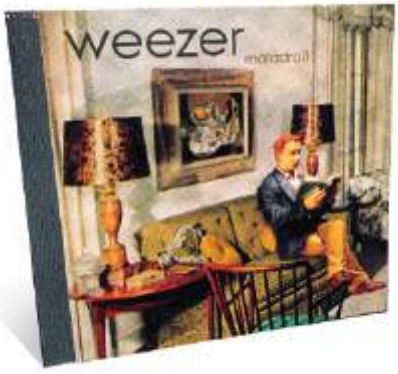
6 Dirk Wachtelaer konstruction/deconstruktion (FMR)

5 Fredy Studer and DJ M. Singe Duos 14-20 (For 4 Ears)

These two experimental percussion-laden releases take drums and drumming into another dimension, sometimes with mixed results. On **DIRK WACHTELAER**'s slap-happy disk, all the sizzling, squawking, and stuttering we hear emanates from brushes, sticks, mallets, and other unusual objects. The Belgian basher sampled his solo acoustic performances and then played those bits on an Octapad. For the most part, this patchwork percussion works, but when it doesn't, it sounds like a broken-down factory machine wheezing toward the end of its useful life. Nonetheless, Wachtelaer should be crowned for his artistic chutzpah. (www.fmr-records.com)

On *Duos*, Swiss drummer **FREDY STUDER** and New York turntablist DJ M. Singe (Beth Coleman) team up for what *could* have been one of the most beat-centric releases of the year. Given their combined experience in house, illbient, and avant-garde jazz, we expected a lot more excitement and tense, explosive grooves. Besides the churning "Duo 18" and "Duo 15"—a collage of pulsating beats and French-accented voices—the CD falls short. (www.for4ears.com) **Will Romano**

7 Weezer Maladroit (Geffen)



Weezer has not done a Radiohead. The band remains prolific in its mandated pop, thank you very much, although *Maladroit* reveals a harder, more reflective edge. Extensive touring will do that. **PATRICK WILSON**'s drumming is as unbridled as ever, his fills spilling recklessly but appropriately, as on "Fall Together." His drum *sound* is another matter. Much less tenuous than previously, here it's fat and up front, where it ought to be, thanks to Tom Lord-Alge, who captures all the little overtones. Lest we waste the reference to Radiohead, check out "Slob"—dangerously, er, *creep*-y. **T. Bruce Wittet**

8 Our Lady Peace Gravity (Columbia)

Canadian band Our Lady Peace has shuffled the deck. Two members are new, and producer/lover-of-detail Arnold Lanni is on vacation. (Bob Rock is at the helm.) The resulting album is devoid of excesses. Case in point is Raine Maida's shrill falsetto and octave vocals, forsaken for a blunter midrange. Fans will also notice that drummer **JEREMY TAGGART** has left out plenty of ghost notes and fills. His groove sits better, and his sound looms larger for the omissions. So what remains? Grinding power pop, superb dynamics, intriguing and compassionate lyrics—and ten potential radio hits. **T. Bruce Wittet**

7 Johnny Vidacovich Vidacovich (PawMaw)

In "Coffee," Vidacovich expounds on his love of the brown nectar. But that's readily obvious from the charged-up, edgy, quirky energy on this vibrant disc. As always, the drummer/leader delivers hip, fun listening with his mix of New Orleans second-line grooves, *fawnk*, and explosive jazz chops. Johnny's beat poet-like "vocals" are an acquired taste, but the humor keeps it aloft. The formats are varied, rotating reeds, keys, guitar, bass, and some absolutely killer sousaphone. A member of Crescent City's drum royalty, Mr. V plays here with spontaneous, dog-like eagerness. He's a kick. (www.JohnnyVidacovich.com) **Jeff Potter**

7 The Flaming Lips Yoshimi Battles The Pink Robots (Warner Bros.)

Childlike yet mature, psychedelic yet humanistic, The Flaming Lips fall comfortably into no category, and have very few musical peers. *Yoshimi Battles The Pink Robots* is their prettiest collection to date. (The swing from Cramps fanatics to ELO admirers is now complete.) And it's honorable that multi-instrumentalist **STEVEN DROZD** puts his big, beautiful beats through some serious digital editing for art's sake here. The musician in me marvels at the achievement—and digs Drozd's hugely artful contributions. But the drummer in me misses the sweat and blood of their earlier albums. We all gotta move on, though, and The Lips must be praised for once again raising a bar or two. **Adam Budofsky**

RETURN OF THE METAL MONSTERS

Eighties Metal is back with a vengeance, and we've got three new killer releases to prove it. First off, the new studio album from Dokken, *Long Way Home*, featuring original drummer **MICK BROWN**, offers strong, straight-ahead, radio-friendly metal. Brown plays for the music: solid and simple. Drum sounds are phat and studio-perfect. (Sanctuary)

Megadeth returns long enough to record a scorching double live CD, and then...breaks up again, making this an extra-special treat for fans. *Rude Awakening* includes twenty-four tracks, including the classic "Peace Sells." Drummer **JIMMY DEGRASSO** unleashes furious double bass chops, including a steroid-packed drum solo. (Sanctuary)

The cream of this crop is the double live set from Iron Maiden, *Rock In Rio*. These British metal icons (featuring vocalist Bruce Dickinson) are in top form. *Rio* features nineteen classic Maiden tracks, including outstanding versions of "Run To The Hills" and "The Number Of The Beast." Drummer **NICKO MCBRAIN** powers the Maiden with emotion and intensity. The grooves never wander or stretch, showing Nicko's maturity and musicality. (Sony) **Mike Haid**

PROG ROUNDUP

8 The Jelly Jam The Jelly Jam (Inside Out Music)

This '60s-sounding trip features hard-edged, melodic pop-rock with a tough new attitude. Great vocal hooks and nicely layered guitars from **Ty Tabor** (King's X) prompt **ROD MORGENSTEIN** to unleash some of his strongest drumming to date. This power trio (with an emphasis on "power") rocks with authority while adding spice. It's all about the song here. (insideoutmusic.com)

7 4Front Radio Waves Goodbye (independent)

4Front possess many classic prog elements. Guitarist **Zak Rizvi** recorded, mixed, mastered, and wrote most of this well-done guitar-oriented prog material. The drums sound a bit over-processed, but drummer **JOE BERGAMINI**'s groove and chops are tight on each challenging arrangement. (www.joebergamini.com)

8 Planet X Live From Oz (Inside Out Music)

This intense live collection features past and future **Planet X** material. Here these instrumental prog mind-benders push the depth of their talents, developing new, uncharted territory. Drum legend and producer **SIMON PHILLIPS** provides a great mix. **VIRGIL DONATI** dances on his double-stroke, double bass workout "Dog Boots" and creatively solos throughout. (insideoutmusic.com) **Mike Haid**

7 Roberto J. Rodriguez El Danzon De Moises (Tzadik)

Cuban drummer, percussionist, and composer **ROBERTO RODRIGUEZ** explores his Jewish heritage on this album, resulting in a unique fusion of two distinct cultures' music. The instrumentation the drummer works with reflects his approach—accordion, tuba, violin, cello, clarinet, and soprano saxophone play lilting, slightly melancholy melodies over the subtly dancing rhythms provided by the Cuban percussion. **SUSIE IBARRA** joins Rodriguez in the percussion section here, and together they create a foundation that is tastefully understated and compelling at the same time. **Martin Patmos**

BOOKS

8 How To Set Up Your Drumset / How To Tune Your Drums by Dave Black (Alfred)

level: all, $4.95 (each)

These two short reference guides should be in every drummer's stick bag. Coming in at a brisk 32 small pages, *How To Set Up Your Drumset* begins with a quick look at your basic drum setup, followed by a thorough tutorial on the set's many parts and pieces. And when I say "thorough," I mean it; even kick pedal tension is covered. Next is the ever-complicated world of cymbal type and arrangement. Last up we cover sticks, cases, and basic maintenance tips, including cymbal repair. In the 24-page *How To Tune Your Drums*, Black addresses both the cross-tension and clockwise approaches in detail, as well as important topics like seating and muffling drumheads. With plenty of pictures and easy-to-read text, you'll want to keep these booklets at arm's reach at all times. **Fran Azzarto**

VIDEOS

8 Scotty Irving/Clang Quartet Armor Of God (Bright Eye Pictures)

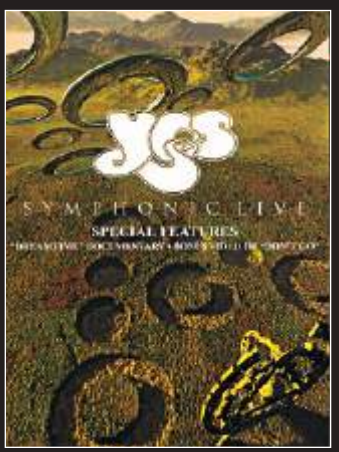
level: all, $15

"If I am really, really, *really* serious about something, I will stick with it to the point of almost crushing it to death." This self-assessment by drummer Scotty Irving may or may not be accurate. (I've never met the guy.) But if you're not scared off by his Christ-centric, one-man-band, spoken-word/percussion-destruction performances, you'll likely be quite inspired by them. This fascinating twelve-minute documentary is not an "educational video" in the conventional sense. But to those who've ever experienced "drummer as outsider" feelings, or to whom statements like "Improvisation, like Christianity, takes a lot of faith" and "Noise is not an unpleasant thing to me" touch any kind of chord, you'd do well to search this tape out. (www.brighteyepictures.com) **Adam Budofsky**

DVDS

8 Yes Symphonic Live (Eagle Rock Entertainment)

level: all, $24.98 (VHS: $19.98)



Through Dolby digital 5.1 and superb, up-close camera work, this 194-minute, two-disc collection captures one of prog rock's most enduring acts live in Amsterdam with a 45-piece orchestra on their 2001 *Magnification* tour. On disc one we see and hear long-time drummer **ALAN WHITE** playing with equal flair such vintage tracks as "Close To The Edge," "Starship Trooper," and "Gates Of Delirium," as well as the band's latest, extravagant symphonic compositions. In the classic epic "Ritual," which features a rare White drum solo, Jon Anderson, Chris Squire, keyboardist Tom Brislin, and members of the European Festival Orchestra join in, building a frenzied, downright evil polyrhythmic romp. The second disc contains a video for "Don't Go" and a documentary with band interviews. A great package and a must for fans. **Will Romano**

To order any of the books or videos reviewed in this month's *Critique*, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, call Books Now at (800) BOOKS-NOW (266-5766) or surf to www.clicksmart.com/moderndrummer.
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Berklee Percussion Week 2002

Berklee College of Music's percussion department hosted its annual Percussion Week this past April 4–6. This year's events included eighteen concerts and nine master classes/clinics. April 6 also featured the Massachusetts Percussive Arts Society's Day of Percussion.

Jazz drumset great **Billy Hart** was an artist-in-residence for the entire week. Billy conducted a daily master class, visited many Berklee classrooms, and shared a concert with percussion department assistant chair Yoron Israel.

Additional performances included a riveting concert by the group **Six Drumsets**, led by percussion faculty member **Steve Wilkes**. The group featured **Marko Djordjevic** (sponsored by Mapex drums, Zildjian cymbals, and Evans drumheads) and **Johnny Rabb** (sponsored by Drum Workshop, Meinl cymbals and percussion, and Evans drumheads).

The Massachusetts PAS's Day Of Percussion featured top drum corps artists **Thom Hannum** and **Jeff Queen** (sponsored by Pearl), Boston Symphony Orchestra percussionist/timpanist **Tim Genis** (sponsored by Yamaha), percussionist **Neil Grover** (sponsored by Grover Pro Percussion), and Berklee faculty member/drumset artist **Mike Mangini** (sponsored by Pearl drums and Zildjian cymbals). Also featured were some outstanding Massachusetts public and private school groups, and Berklee's own Percussion Ensemble, directed by percussion department chair **Dean Anderson**.

Other Berklee faculty performances were presented by **Angelamia Bachemin**, **Jamey Haddad**, **Nancy Zeltsman**, **Joe Hunt**, **Ernesto Diaz**, **Mohamad Camara**, **Ron Reid**, **Mark Walker**, **Dave Weigert**, **Ricardo Monzon**, and **Larry Finn**. Faculty member **Dave DiCenso** (sponsored by Pearl drums and Zildjian cymbals) led the week's dynamic final concert.

Jazz great Billy Hart was artist-in-residence at Berklee College of Music's Percussion Week 2002.

Toni Ballard

Associate professor Larry Finn presented a high-energy repertoire of R&B and funk styles, with faculty members Dave Limina (on keyboards) and Dave Buda (on bass), plus special guests.

Assistant professor Angelamia Bachemin presented "Afriquita" to introduce her new genre of percussion: ragga jazz.

Sarah Godcher Murphy

Billy Hart chats with Berklee students after his drumset master class.

Wootcamp 2002

Sixty students recently traveled from all over the world to experience bass superstar **Victor Wooten**'s third annual "Wootcamp," a six-day bass/nature course in Burnes, Tennessee. There were almost as many drummers among the "campers" as bass players, so the relationship between bass players and drummers was a major topic all week long.

Lots of top drummers dropped by to add their input. **FutureMan** (famous for his Drumitar) slammed on the acoustic drums, and **J.D. Blair** (Take 6, Shania Twain, Shelby Lynn) showed us how to groove without playing a note. Newcomer **Marcus Finnie** wowed everyone with his old/young groove and energy, and **Jim Roberts** added his dancing percussion to the mix.

Victor Wooton in session.

Bass instructors included **Steve Bailey** (The Rippingtons, Dizzy Gillespie, and Larry Carlton), **Anthony Wellington** and **Dave Welsch** (pros from Baltimore and New York), and **Adam Nitti** (Atlanta Institute of Music). **Christian McBride** (Bruce Hornsby, Sting, Jack DeJohnette) made a surprise appearance on the final night.

Future Man grooving on the skins!

The legendary **Chuck Rainey** (Steely Dan, Aretha Franklin, Patti La Belle) offered insight into where one of the most-recorded bass players of all time gets his inspiration. "I look to the drummer," said Chuck. "Those ghost notes and grooves always push me to create new ideas." Victor Wooten added, "Think of a band as a family. The bass player and the drummer are the parents. We create a foundation so that the kids can shine."

Wootcamp combines the instruction of skilled instrumentalists with that of naturalists who demonstrate survival skills, open the senses, and challenge the body with yoga and martial arts. Using the earth as a chalkboard, animal

Bass legend Chuck Rainey

J.D. Blair feels it.

Blindfolded in nature. Learning to feel.

Jim Roberts tries a similar approach to percussion.

tracks as textbooks, and ancient tribal wisdom as technique, our Nature instructors exposed our fears, chiseled away at our egos, and made room for more music.

What can drummers learn from a dark forest and a room full of bass players? Tons. We learned that being scared (of bugs, darkness, and animal sounds), being aware (of feeling the earth with your bare feet), and being brave (by learning to start a fire without a match) changes us as people and as players. Being blindfolded helped us remember our sense of *feel*...a long-forgotten subject when learning to play our instruments.

Victor Wooten said that his goal with this camp was to get people to let loose and just *play*—like a kid playing air guitar. "When you play as if the notes don't matter," he told us, "that's when you really start *feeling*, rather than thinking, the music."

Jen Hoeft

In Memoriam

David Karcich

On April 2, 2002, David Karcich—drummer/songwriter for successful punk-ska bands such as Spring Heeled Jack and The Pilfers (and, on occasion, The Toasters)—suffered a brain aneurysm. He went into a coma in which he remained until he quietly passed away during the morning hours of April 5.

David had recently won the drum throne for Mighty Mighty Bosstones bassist Joe Gittleman's new project, Avoid One Thing. His outstanding talent can be heard on the band's debut album, which is in stores now. David was very excited about his duties with the band, and was about to head out on tour with an appearance on the Van's Warped Tour when he was stricken.

Bosstones drummer Joe Sirois volunteered to hit the road with Avoid One Thing as a tribute to David. In addition, a David Karcich tribute site has been set up at www.geocities.com/shjdave/SHJDave.

Chad Brandolini

Tony Caselli

The Chicago music community was saddened by the death of Anthony "Tony" Caselli on May 20 of this year. Tony had studied with Roy Knapp at DePaul University and was well known as a performer and teacher in the Chicago area for over forty years.

Early in his career Tony toured with the Guy Lombardo and Jimmy Dorsey orchestras, and with Dick Schory's Percussion Pops. Returning to Chicago, he backed artists like Bob Hope, John Davidson, Phyllis Diller, Engelbert Humperdinck, Maureen McGovern, and many others. He played on many recording sessions as well as for *The Bozo Show* and for Chicago Bears football games. He also led his own orchestra.

Tony was highly regarded as a teacher. He was an associate lecturer at Northwestern University for seventeen years, and at one time taught as many as seventy students per week. His approach to teaching didn't focus only on individual skills. He also encouraged his students to expand their abilities after they left his tutelage.

As he grew older, Tony would joke, "I keep losing gigs to my students." In reality, he will be remembered for the pride and dedication that he demonstrated to his students, and for his remarkable commitment to teaching.

Allen Saxon

INDY QUICKIES

The fourth annual **Atlanta Vintage & Custom Drum Show** will be held this coming Saturday, September 21, at the Ramada Inn Conference Center in Atlanta, Georgia. Over twenty-five exhibitors will participate, and attendees will have opportunities to buy, sell, or trade drums and other percussion equipment. The show will also feature a drum clinic by **Craig Krampf**, an appearance by **William F. Ludwig II**, and drum raffles. For more information, call Billy Jeansonne at (770) 438-0844 or email billyjeansonne@earthlink.net.

Drummer/author/educator **Chuck Silverman** is organizing educational programs in Cuba and Brazil through his Global Rhythm Cooperative. The **First Annual Havana Drum Festival** is scheduled for this coming November 6–10. For information, visit www.chucksilverman.com or www.chucksilverman.com/grc.html.

"Better Hearing And Speech Month" this past May got a boost thanks to the Bid For Hearing online charity auction, sponsored by audio manufacturer **Shure Inc**. Beginning on April 29, fans duked it out on eBay, bidding for artist-signed mic's, audio electronics, and memorabilia. (For a complete listing of artists who donated items, visit www.shure.com/hearing.) By May 10 over $10,000 had been raised. All proceeds benefited Los Angeles-based **House Ear Institute**, a non-profit organization dedicated to advancing hearing science through research and education in order to improve quality of life. For more information call (213) 483-4431 or visit www.hei.org.

DRUM KICKS

"Okay, who's the wise guy who put fish in my drum?"

QUICK BEATS

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Paul La Raia

What are some of your favorite grooves?
There are *so* many, but here are a few: John Bonham on "Fool In The Rain" (Led Zeppelin), Stewart Copeland on "Walking On The Moon" (The Police), and Pete Thomas on "Pump It Up" (Elvis Costello).

What do you listen to in your car?
One of my favorite "car discs" is U2's *All That You Can't Leave Behind*. That record is truly amazing. I can't put it down. I also love *Toxicity* by System Of A Down. That's some kick-ass, freak-out rock.

If you could put an imaginary band together, who would be in it?
That's a tough one. But here's one scenario: Sting on lead vocals and bass, with Sade also on lead vocals. Johnny Marr (from The Smiths) and Chuck Berry on guitar. Steve Nieve on keyboards, Chet Baker on trumpet, and me filling in wherever needed—and pretending that I belong!

What's your favorite TV theme music?
Again, so many to choose from: *Miami Vice* (sorry), *Magnum P.I.* (sorry), and *Three's Company* (not sorry).

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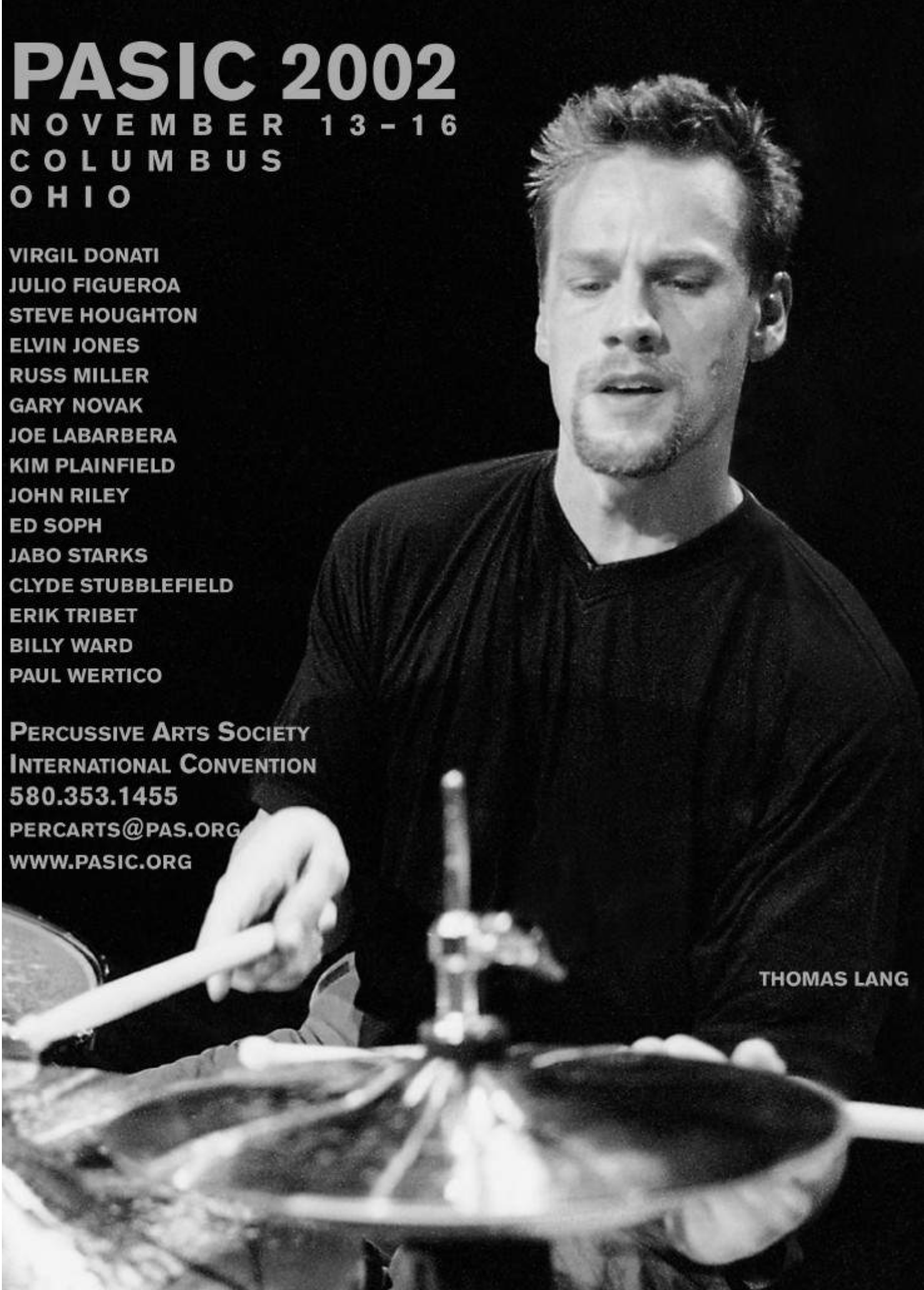

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PHOTO REQUIREMENTS

1. Photos must be high-quality and in color. 35mm slides are preferred; color prints will be considered; Polaroids not accepted. 2. You may send more than one view of the kit. 3. Only show drums, no people. 4. Shoot drums against a neutral background. Avoid "busy" backgrounds. 5. Clearly highlight special attributes of your kit. Send photo(s) to: Drumkit Of The Month, Modern Drummer, 12 Old Bridge Road, Cedar Grove, NJ 07009-1288. Photos cannot be returned.

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